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I. COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

On 29 November 1991, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed at United Nations Headquarters, New York, and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna, as well as in several other cities.

All States Members of the United Nations, specialized agencies and observers were invited to attend the solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People which took place at United Nations Headquarters in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

At that meeting, statements were made by H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo (Senegal), Chairman of the Committee, and H.E. Mr. Samir Shihabi (Saudi Arabia), President of the General Assembly. Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship, delivered a message from the Secretary-General.

H.E. Mr. Aurel Dragos Munteanu (Romania), President of the Security Council for the month of November, made a statement. Also, Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), read out a message from Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO.

Further statements were made by H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka), Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; H.E. Mr. Darko Silovic (Yugoslavia), representative of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries; H.E. Mr. Mustafa Aksin (Turkey), representative of the Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference; H.E. Mr. Muhammad H. El-Farra, Under-Secretary-General for Palestinian Affairs of the League of Arab States; H.E. Mr. Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Ni'mah (Qatar), representative of the Chairman of the Gulf Cooperation Council; and Ms. Colleen F. McGuire, representative of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP).

Concluding statements were made by the Chairman and Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, head of the Political Department of the PLO.

Messages to commemorate the occasion were received from 21 heads of States, 11 heads of Government, 12 Foreign Ministers, 3 Governments, as well as the representatives of 3 intergovernmental organizations, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Still further messages were received from 26 non-governmental organizations active on the question of Palestine.

In further commemoration of the International Day, the Committee arranged the screening of a series of films during the week beginning 29 November in the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium.

At the request of the Committee, in still further commemoration of the International Day, the office of the Permanent Observer for Palestine to the United Nations presented an exhibit in cooperation with the Committee, which was displayed in the Public Lobby at United Nations Headquarters from 29 November to 5 December 1991.

At Geneva, a solemn meeting was held in the afternoon of 29 November 1991. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva, Mr. Jan Martenson, who read out the Secretary-General's New York statement and that of the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, H.E. Dr. Stanley Kalpagé (Sri Lanka). H.E. Mr. Joseph Cassar, Permanent Representative of Malta at Geneva, spoke on behalf of the Committee. The Permanent Observer for Palestine at Geneva, Mr. Ramlawi, also made a statement. Statements were also made by representatives of the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of African Unity and ICCP. Other related activities included the screening of a Department of Public Information film on the question of Palestine, as well as the mounting of a United Nations exhibit on Palestine, and a display organized by the Geneva United Nations Arab Book Club.

At Vienna, a solemn meeting was held in the afternoon of 29 November. The meeting was chaired by the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, Ms. Margaret Joan Anstee, who read out the Secretary-General's New York statement. The Foreign Minister of Austria, H.E. Dr. Alois Mock, addressed this meeting. The Ambassador of Tunisia at Vienna spoke on behalf of the Committee. Statements were made by the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Mr. Ilter Türkmen, and the Permanent Observer for Palestine at Vienna, Mr. Faisal Awadah. The programme at Vienna also included the screening of videotapes on the cultural

and traditional life of the Palestinian family; an exhibition of works by the Palestinian painter, Mrs. Samia Zaru; an exhibit of Palestinian clothing and handicraft items, posters and publications. Information from UNRWA concerning its activities was also made available. In the course of the day, a Palestinian folk music group played in the Rotunda and national dishes were served in the cafeteria.

II. TEXTS OF STATEMENTS MADE AND MESSAGES DELIVERED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, 1991

Statement by H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

Today, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is holding a solemn meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in keeping with General Assembly resolution 32/40 B of 2 December 1977.

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome H.E. Mr. Samir Shihabi, President of the General Assembly; H.E. Mr. Aurel Dragos Munteanu, President of the Security Council; H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship; and H.E. Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Bureau of the Palestine Liberation Organization, representative of Palestine. I should also like to welcome representatives of Member States, intergovernmental organizations and liberation movements, and representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of the press and all those who have accepted the Committee's invitation to participate in this solemn meeting.

I now invite everyone present to rise and observe a minute of silence in memory of all those who have given their lives for the cause of the Palestinian people.

I should now like to make a statement on behalf of the Committee.

Our meeting is taking place at a historic moment in the long struggle by the Palestinian people to regain its history, its identity and its national rights. Much blood has been shed and much suffering has taken place since the General Assembly, 44 years ago today, decided to partition the land of Palestine and called for the creation of two independent States, Arab and Jewish, joined in economic union, and for a special international regime for Jerusalem.

The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established to help redress the imbalance resulting from the creation of only one of those States and the dispossession of the Palestinian people. Over the years, the Committee has done its utmost to place the question of Palestine as a national issue on the international agenda and to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine based on respect for international legality and for the rights and interests of all the parties concerned.

Today, we feel that this goal may have come a step closer in the light of the important opportunity created by the conference held at Madrid under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union. Our Committee was particularly encouraged by the express wish of the co-sponsors to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The agreement reached at Madrid between the Palestinian and Israeli delegations on the basis of those resolutions indicates that the Government of Israel is moving towards recognition of the Palestinian people as its interlocutor and that progress may indeed be possible towards the realization of our long-standing objectives. The Madrid conference has shown conclusively that the question of Palestine is the core issue that needs to be addressed in efforts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict and that the Palestinian people, through its recognized representatives, is a principal party in any negotiating process in this regard.

We hope that the spirit of good will and mutual respect that characterized the meeting in Madrid will continue in the coming months. The Committee is under no illusion that the road is still extremely long and fraught with difficulties. The deep fears and mutual suspicions engendered by 44 years of conflict will not be easily overcome. There is an urgent need for measures to defuse the continuing tension and violence in the region, which is exacerbated by the dynamic of occupation and repression and the growing danger of extremism.

The Committee firmly believes that the restoration of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Palestinians living in the occupied territory, including Jerusalem, and for the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, would help create a climate more conducive to peace. The confiscation of land and building of settlements; the use of firearms to deal with demonstrators; the curfews and restrictions on freedom of movement and association; the continued detention of thousands of persons; the use of deportations and collective punishment; the separation of thousands of families, and the fetters imposed on the economic development of the occupied territory must cease so that a meaningful peace process might move forward.

In numerous resolutions, the United Nations and in particular the Security Council have expressed the consensus of the international community with regard to the legal obligations of Israel, the occupying power, under the Fourth Geneva Convention and have called for implementation of its provisions. The fact that talks may be in progress between the parties, and outside of the United Nations framework, does not detract in any way from Israel's obligations to respect the Convention and to abide by the Security Council's resolutions.

There are many obvious measures that the occupying power can take immediately in order to demonstrate its good will and readiness for peace, and without jeopardizing its security, and we call on the Government of Israel to act with wisdom and foresight, in response to the overwhelming desire for peace manifested both by the Palestinian people and by the Israeli people.

For its part, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People will continue to do its utmost in accordance with its mandate, to contribute to the attainment of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement based on respect for the norms of international law, the United Nations Charter, and the relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee is of the view that interim arrangements worked out between the parties as a result of the process initiated at Madrid must eventually result in such a settlement if a durable peace, accepted and respected by all, is to be achieved.

The changing international circumstances have created a positive climate in which it is increasingly recognized that military solutions are ultimately unworkable and self-defeating, and that peace and security can be achieved only if the legitimate aspirations of all the parties to a conflict are met, avoiding notions of winners and losers.

Forty-four years ago, in partitioning Palestine, the United Nations undertook a great responsibility regarding the Palestinians and the Jews, who were thereby enjoined to share the land to which both laid exclusive claim. The intervening history of rejection, armed conflict and occupation does not and cannot change this necessary approach to a just solution which is founded on internationally recognized principles and has the support of the entire international community, as well as of substantial sectors of the Israeli population.

As we celebrate today the anniversary of that historic decision, let us recommit ourselves to its implementation and to solidarity with the Palestinian people until its historic and just objective, sovereignty in its own land, is finally achieved.

Let us hope at last that that blessed land of Palestine, the cradle of revealed religions, will once again inspire both Israelis and Palestinians to gather together at the meeting place of history.

H.E. Mr. Samir S. Shihabi,
President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly

Madam Chairman, may I first of all express to you and to the members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, my appreciation for having been invited to take part in this special commemorative meeting.

Today we commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Fourteen years ago, by its resolution 32/40 B, the General Assembly decided to commemorate this day, 29 November, as an annual observance, in recognition of the need to strengthen and consolidate international support for the Palestinian people. The designation by the United Nations of this day as a worldwide occasion for the reaffirmation of international day with the Palestinian people reflects the international conviction that peace in the Middle East region must be based on the attainment of justice for the Palestinian people. This Day of Solidarity symbolizes the great importance which the General Assembly, in particular, attaches to the problem of Palestine, the full attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the need to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East.

The problem of Palestine has been a major concern of the United Nations ever since its establishment, and the Organization bears an historic responsibility towards ensuring its just settlement and a full restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people. For over four decades now, the Palestinian people have been struggling resolutely for the recovery of its fundamental rights, including its right to self-determination. The United Nations has an indispensable role to play in this respect, especially in view of the fact that during the past 46 years of its existence the world Organization has adopted numerous resolutions in the General Assembly and the Security Council on the question of Palestine, most of which still remain to be implemented.

At a time when the world is witnessing a major relaxation in international tensions and when solutions to many regional conflicts are being facilitated by the new positive international climate, it is incumbent upon all of us, and in particular the United Nations, to keep the search for a political solution to the question of Palestine high on the international agenda. Now more than ever before, it is imperative for the United Nations to play a central role in this process. It is urgent and indispensable for the Organization to ensure the implementation of its resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which, in the final analysis, represent the basis for an internationally acceptable solution. It must be emphasized that while we seek the support of the United Nations, we must also abide by its resolutions and decisions.

The important positive developments that are currently taking place in the international arena reflect the aspirations of peoples to live in a world where peace, security and justice prevail. The progress made in this field at the international and regional levels provides a sound basis for solutions to all sensitive international problems, including the question of Palestine, which lies at the heart of the Middle East conflict.

It is imperative that the atmosphere of peace should extend to this region, so that it ceases to be a source of tension that might undermine the positive changes taking place in the world today. This objective can be achieved only through the application of United Nations resolutions pertaining to the occupation of territories by force, to the illegal practices which violate the United Nations Charter and international conventions, and full exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights.

Make I take this opportunity to commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and its Chairman, Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo of Senegal, for their continuing efforts in promoting a just solution to the problem of Palestine in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The observance of this International Day of Solidarity will once again reaffirm to the Palestinian people that the United Nations remains committed to its resolutions and decisions on Palestine and to the realization of its inalienable rights.

I should like to take this opportunity, Madam Chairman, to extend to you and to the entire Committee my sincere thanks for your great service to the objectives of the United Nations, and to the comity of nations at large, and to express my best wishes for a successful conclusion to your endeavours.

H.E. Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Secretary-General,
delivered by Mr. James Jonah, Under-Secretary-General for
Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship

I am pleased to deliver the Secretary-General's message, as follows:

"The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which we have gathered here to observe, is a solemn occasion that highlights the significance of the question of Palestine and reminds us, once again, of the enduring commitment of the United Nations to the attainment of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and to a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement in the Middle East. As I have observed in the past, there is a wide measure of agreement within the international community that such a settlement should be based on three considerations: withdrawal of Israeli forces from Arab territories occupied since June 1967; acknowledgement of and respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States in the region, including Israel, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries; and a satisfactory solution of the Palestinian problem based on the recognition of the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination. In this connection, the question of Jerusalem remains of primary importance.

"Today's meeting, which has been organized in accordance with the wishes of the General Assembly, takes place in the light of the historic Middle East peace conference that was held in Madrid from 30 October through 1 November, and an initial round of bilateral discussions between the parties. One need only recall the circumstances prevailing in the region last year at this time to recognize the extent to which prospects for progress in the peace process have, in the interim, been enhanced.

"For my part, I have always maintained that no effort should be spared in the search for a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the issue that lies at its core: the yearning of the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate political rights, including self-determination. In this connection, I have actively pursued the mandate that the General Assembly has since 1983 - and most recently in its resolution 45/68 of 6 December 1990 - entrusted to the Secretary-General with respect to the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East. As requested, in consultation with the Security Council, I was continuously in contact with leaders from Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Palestine Liberation Organization in an effort to facilitate the convening of the conference. It is important to note that, whereas it was not possible to achieve agreement among the parties to participate in such a conference, the positions of the parties, and indeed of the Security Council itself, with respect to an international conference, have evolved over the years.

"In this latter connection, you will recall that, following several weeks of intensive consultations, the Security Council, in conjunction with the adoption of its resolution 681 (1990) on 20 December 1990, issued a presidential statement concerning the method and approach for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace concerning the Arab-Israeli conflict. As for resolution 681 (1990) - itself a most significant decision of the Security Council regarding the situation in the occupied territories - I have undertaken steps towards the fulfilment of the responsibilities entrusted to me therein, including monitoring and observing the situation regarding Palestinian civilians under Israeli occupation, and soliciting the views of the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning a possible meeting. Furthermore, I have, over the years, repeatedly joined the Security Council and the General Assembly in calling upon Israel to accept the de jure applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention to all the territories occupied since 1967 and to abide scrupulously by the provisions of the Convention.

"With the above-mentioned decisions of the Security Council in mind, I decided to reactivate the mission of the Special Representative to the Middle East, as called for in paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 242 (1967). The post had been served with great distinction by Ambassador Gunnar Jarring of Sweden in the years immediately following the adoption of resolution 242 (1967) in November 1967. While the mission had been dormant for a lengthy interval, it is important to recall that it was never officially ended. On 11 January 1991, Ambassador Jarring submitted his resignation, whereupon I announced my intention to designate a successor.

"On 21 March 1991, I informed the Security Council, in informal consultations, of my decision to appoint Ambassador Edouard Brunner of Switzerland as my Special Representative to the Middle East. For their part, the members of the Council welcomed this step. At the same time, in my remarks to the Council I acknowledged the importance of the initiative that had, at that stage, just been launched by the United States regarding the peace process. I reiterated that I have always supported bilateral initiatives in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and that, to this end, any step undertaken by Ambassador Brunner or myself would be aimed at assisting such efforts.

"Accordingly, I followed with keen interest the intensive and often arduous bilateral diplomatic efforts of the past few months that culminated in agreement by the parties to enter into a negotiating process, under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, aimed at achieving - in the words of the letter of invitation to the peace conference - 'a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement through direct negotiations on two tracks, between Israel and the Arab States, and between Israel and the Palestinians'. It is important to note in this connection that, although it is being conducted outside the framework of the United Nations, this process has the support of the parties concerned and has as its basis Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which have long been recognized as the cornerstone of a comprehensive settlement.

"During my 10 years in office, there have been few issues to which I have attached greater importance than the search for peace in the Middle East and a just resolution of the question of Palestine. As my mandate draws to a close, I should like to underline my earnest hope that the momentum that has been generated by the Madrid talks will be sustained and that the lasting peace that has so long been denied to all the peoples of the Middle East will indeed become a reality.

"Madam Chairman, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, under your able and dedicated leadership, has always worked untiringly to fulfil the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly. I should like to take this opportunity to commend you, the Bureau and all the members of the Committee on your efforts and to extend my best wishes for the success of your most important endeavour."

H.E. Mr. Aurel Dragos Munteanu,
President of the Security Council for the month of November 1991

Madam Chairman, may I convey at the outset my deep appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the invitation extended to me in my capacity as President of the Security Council to participate in this special meeting marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It is for me both a pleasure and a privilege to join in this important annual event which expresses solidarity with the Palestinian people and the enduring commitment of the international community to the achievement of a just and lasting settlement of the Middle East question. We remain ever mindful that efforts to reach this goal represent not only the recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, but also the possibility of bringing stability to a particularly troubled region of the world, thereby fostering international peace and security.

As is well known, the Security Council has been closely associated with the persistent efforts to forge an equitable solution to the Middle East situation. It has been called upon many times to direct its urgent attention to the crises engendered by the conflict and its consequences. The members of the Security Council reaffirm the need for scrupulous observance of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is fully applicable to all the occupied territories. In so doing, the Council has always been aware of the magnitude of the Palestinian problem, and it remains seized of many aspects of the situation in the Middle East, including the question of the exercise by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights. For its part, therefore, the Security Council will continue to devote attention to the problem with a view to seeking a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for the peoples of the region as a whole.

As President of the Council, I followed with keen interest, as I am sure all members of the Council did, developments leading to the convening of the Madrid peace conference on 30 October 1991. That historic meeting represents a new beginning - a new opportunity to establish a mechanism capable of building a comprehensive, just and lasting peace. It is particularly gratifying that the parties involved - including the two sponsors of the conference, the United States and the Soviet Union - consider Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) to be the basis for any search for a settlement of the Middle East conflict, including the Palestinian question. This promising new beginning - memorable for the fact that for the first time all parties to the conflict, including the representatives of the Palestinian people, took an active

part in the process - gives reason to hope that the conference will resume very shortly to tackle the important substantive issues that lie ahead on the road to peace. The members of the Security Council call on all the parties involved in the peace process launched at Madrid to cooperate in efforts to reach a comprehensive settlement, an in particular a solution to the Palestinian problem in all its aspects.

Guided by the responsibilities entrusted to it by the Charter, the Security Council will continue its efforts to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, for the benefit of all parties concerned, including the Palestinian people.

Mr. Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, delivered by Mr. Shafiq Al-Hout, member of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization

[Original: Arabic]

Madam Chairman, it is an honour to read out to you the message from President Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine, the President of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"H.E. Mr. Samir Shihabi, President of the General Assembly; H.E. Mr. Aurel Dragos Munteanu, President of the Security Council; H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People; the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories; Mr. James Jonah, Representative of the Secretary-General,

"My greetings to you all. On the occasion of your celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is my pleasure to extent to Your Excellency, and through you to all the members of your distinguished Committee, my sincerest brotherly greetings and best wishes for continued success in your noble mission to implement the resolutions of the United Nations and the determination of the international community to enable our people to restore and practice its inalienable national rights.

"I would like to express to you, on behalf of our struggling Palestinian people, on behalf of my brothers and sisters of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and on my own behalf, our high esteem for your assistance to and support of our just cause and the legitimate struggle of our peoples and its national intifadah to put an end to Israeli occupation and to attain a just peace in Palestine and in the Middle East region through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Middle East conflict.

"I highly appreciate the continuous efforts made in every part of the world by this Committee to achieve the noble objectives of providing clear information about our just cause and of winning support and assistance for the restoration of the rights of our people to return, to exercise self-determination and to establish the independent State of Palestine.

"I take this opportunity also to thank the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, particularly since he will be leaving the Organization in a few weeks. I thank him for his continuous support for and assistance to our just cause and to our people's struggle. We especially appreciate his constructive efforts for peace in our region and throughout the world, for the full implementation of United Nations resolutions and for upholding and implementing the Charter.

"It is my pleasure also to congratulate sincerely H.E. Mr. Boutros Boutros Ghali, the Secretary-General elect. It is our strong hope that he will live up to the trust the international community has placed in him and that he will strive to achieve the purposes of the United Nations and attain international peace and security. There can be no international peace and security without peace, security and stability in the Middle East and the Mediterranean region, on the basis of justice and the resolutions of the United Nations.

"Today's commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is taking place at a decisive time for the Palestinian cause. As members know, the Madrid peace conference was held on 30 October 1991, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and of the principle of land for peace, under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union and with the participation of all the parties concerned with the Middle East conflict. We cannot fail today to express our deep appreciation for the constructive efforts of the two Presidents of the conference in order that the peace effort could begin.

"Members also know that the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, has made an outstanding constructive contribution with the aim of facilitating the convening of the conference despite the unjust conditions, constant provocation and serious obstacles imposed by the Israeli Government to obstruct the convening of the conference. Our agreement to participate in the conference has been in response to the peaceful will of our people, which was expressed in the resolutions adopted at the nineteenth and twentieth sessions of the Palestine National Council and in the resolutions of the Palestine Central Council. It responded also to the general international climate, which favours a new world order in which peace, security and stability would prevail on the basis of the United Nations Charter and on the basis of justice and protection of the right of peoples to freedom, peace, security and the enjoyment of human rights.

"At the same time, the Palestinian people in the occupied territories continues its broad national intifadah and its legitimate struggle, which have been accepted by international forums, to put an end to Israeli occupation and achieve a just peace in Palestine and throughout the region on the basis of the principle upon which Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) were based, namely the inadmissibility of the acquisition of the land of others by force.

"But despite the peace process and the convening of the Madrid peace conference, the Israeli Government persists in its aggressive, repressive policies against the Palestinian people. Rather than adopting confidence-building measures, it engaged in harassment and places major obstacles intended to obstruct and frustrate peace efforts and to divert them from the achievement of their objectives.

"In that context, the repeated Israeli acts of aggression and air raids against our people wherever they may be in southern Lebanon have been perpetrated; the 'iron-fist' policy has been escalated; Israel's oppression of our people in the occupied territories has been intensified; the feverish settlement programme in the Palestinian and the other occupied Arab territories continues and gathers more momentum with forced Jewish immigration from the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Ethiopia and the settlement of those immigrants in new settlements in the occupied territories. This contravenes all United Nations resolutions and defies the will of the international community, which views those settlements as illegal and an obstacle to peace. In addition, there has been the recent Knesset resolution, insisting on the annexation of the occupied Golan Heights. This is yet another act of provocation and defiance by the Israelis, not only vis-à-vis the parties directly concerned in the conflict in that territory but also vis-à-vis the two Presidents of the Madrid conference, the international community at large and the resolutions of the United Nations which have declared the annexation of Al-Quds and the Golan to be null and void.

"The most recent aggression against Jerusalem's Islamic Court, on Monday, 18 November 1991, by a combined force of Israeli police, intelligence officers and border guards was yet another act of defiance and provocation by the Israeli Government.

"The convening of the peace conference in Madrid is a new opening to a difficult path, but a path towards a noble objective - namely, the establishment of a just peace in the area on the basis of resolutions of international legitimacy and the right of our peoples to self-determination. It is in fact an important historic opportunity that we should not miss, and it should not be met by efforts to impede and deplete, and by other such actions of harassment.

"The Palestinian people, who have struggled for half a century for the right to a free, independent and dignified life on its land, as enjoyed by the other peoples of the area and of the world, has the moral and material courage to deal constructively and positively with it. Peace, security and stability go hand in hand with right and justice, and the time and the opportunity have come for right and justice for all Palestinian people to be achieved in order that there may be peace, security and stability for both the Palestinian and the Israeli peoples, and for all the peoples of the region.

"We take this opportunity to convey our deep thanks and gratitude to the peaceful forces in Israel, in the various parties and influential trends in Israel, and all the Israelis calling for recognition of the national right of the Palestinian people and for a dialogue to be opened with the PLO, and all the Israelis who support the principle of exchanging land for peace as a basis for a lasting and just peace in the area. We should like to thank them because with open minds and enlightened hearts they are facing the trends of darkness and extremism and intransigence, in order to build a new and secure and peaceful life in the future for this generation and generations to come.

"Through this celebration today, we should like to make an urgent call to your Committee, and to the United Nations and the international community as a whole, for the need to provide international protection for our peoples and to work to put an end to Israel's violations of the resolutions of the United Nations and its Charter, including putting an end to the establishment of settlements, the expropriation of land and water resources, and putting an end to the oppressive and coercive policies practiced by the occupation authorities against our peoples and against their sacred entities, in order to give a new impetus to the peace operation and provide it with the necessary elements of confidence for its success. And this requires a greater role for the United Nations in this present peace operation.

"I should like, in conclusion, to express our deep thanks and gratitude and appreciation to you, wishing you continued success in your noble tasks, so that you are able to carry out the tasks of your Committee and to participate in achieving a just and lasting peace in our area and restoring the enjoyment by our peoples of their inalienable national rights. I should also like to extend our thanks to Mr. James Jonah, who has conveyed to us the message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations."

SPECIAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE ISRAELI PRACTICES AFFECTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND OTHER ARABS OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

H.E. Mr. Stanley Kalpagé, Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations and Chairman of the Special Committee

I wish to convey to you, Madam Chairman, and to the other members of the Committee my felicitations and good wishes and those of the other members of the Special Committee, whose chairmanship is held by Sri Lanka. I am grateful for the invitation to participate in this meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Since its establishment by the General Assembly in December 1968, the Special Committee has endeavoured to provide in its reports a faithful and accurate picture of the human rights situation in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This year, owing to the negative attitude of the Israeli authorities with regard to the Special Committee, as well as their persistent refusal to cooperate, the Special Committee has once again been prevented from visiting the occupied territories and carrying out in situ investigations with regard to the human rights situation.

The Committee has nevertheless striven to fulfil its mandate to the best of its ability by reflecting in its report relevant information - both oral and written and from a wide range of sources - on the human rights situation in the occupied territories. The Special Committee has taken particular care to rely on information, including reports from the Israeli press and other news media in the occupied territories, that has not been contradicted by the Government of Israel.

In doing so the Special Committee has, over the years, expressed the hope that the alarming picture presented by its reports will serve to further sensitize the international community to the plight of the population of the occupied territories, while encouraging meaningful efforts to secure an improvement in the human rights conditions prevailing in these territories.

The Special Committee has examined and analyzed the information and evidence put before it. It has reached the conclusion, as reflected in its twenty-third report to the General Assembly, that the human rights situation of the Palestinians and other Arabs in the occupied territories has deteriorated to such an extent that this population is reaching a state of mere survival. The particular circumstances that people had to face recently as a result of the Gulf crisis and the ensuing war and the constant deterioration in their living conditions represent a serious challenge for the international community. If another major explosion in the region is to be avoided, there will have to be sustained efforts to convince Israel that it must put an end to its human rights practices in the occupied territories.

The Israeli occupation authorities continued to resort to such practices during the period under review. They continue to use harsh methods in trying to quell the popular struggle, and these have resulted in heavy loss of life and in severe and widespread injuries. The violence and repression have caused considerable suffering in all segments of the population, including very young children, women and old people. Hardly a single locality in the occupied territories has been spared. Day-to-day life - already characterized by constant unrest, random acts of violence, clashes between Arab civilians and Israeli soldiers, tax raids, scores of arrests and acts of aggression by Israeli settlers - has become even more precarious as a result of the severe deprivation endured during and after the Persian Gulf war.

The prolonged and continuous curfews imposed upon the Arab population of the occupied territories during that period made access to basic needs, such as food and medical treatment, difficult - sometimes practically impossible. The damage inflicted upon agriculture and the loss of income suffered by several thousand Arab workers as a result of these curfews have contributed to the further deterioration of already-critical living conditions. Other kinds of collective punishment have also been resorted to. I refer, for example, to the demolition of houses. It is alleged that this practice, which usually affects a large number of innocent people, is engaged in for security reasons.

The administration of justice too has been marked by a deterioration in human rights standards. Palestinians and other Arabs have very often been denied legal safeguards, including the right to a fair trial. On the other hand, it seems that Israelis charged with killing or ill-treating Arab civilians have usually benefited from leniency quite disproportionate to the gravity of the offence. Several thousand Palestinians, including minors and women, continue to be detained in various detention centres, some of which are inside Israel itself. There have been repeated complaints about various forms of torture and ill-treatment suffered by prisoners, including minors.

The illegal policy of expelling Palestinians from the occupied territories, allegedly for security reasons - a policy that clearly violates the relevant provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and was halted for a few months - was reactivated recently. The Israeli authorities have also resumed the expulsion of Palestinians who do not have a valid "staying visa", and they continue to settle new immigrants in the occupied territories in spite of the wave of protest from the international community. Recently we witnessed the creation of new settlements, including those for newly arrived Jewish immigrants, in the occupied territories, as well as the deliberate policy of drastically expanding and increasing existing settlements. This policy indicates a deliberate intention to modify the demographic composition of the occupied territories.

There are still various obstacles to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms. Freedom of movement - almost completely abolished during the Persian Gulf war - is still severely limited, as is freedom of expression, religion and association. The prolonged closure of educational institutions, the denial of proper teaching facilities and the harassment of teachers and students have contributed to a noticeable drop in the previously high standard of education.

Since the adoption, last August, of the Special Committee's twenty-third report, the human rights situation in the occupied territories has continued to cause a high degree of preoccupation. A climate of fear, violence and repression continues to characterize the day-to-day life of the Arab civilians who are faced with constantly deteriorating living conditions. In view of the gravity of these developments my two colleagues on the Special Committee and I appeal once more to the international community to assume its responsibilities towards the Palestinians and other Arabs of the occupied territories by taking urgent measures to ensure the restoration of the basic human rights and freedoms of which those peoples have long been deprived.

It is our sincere hope that the process that has been initiated with the Madrid conference on the Middle East will pave the way for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, taking into account the rights of all peoples in the area, including the fundamental rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs in the occupied territories.

MOVEMENT OF NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES

H.E. Mr. Darko Silovic, Permanent Representative of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to the United Nations and current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries

I am greatly honoured to address this solemn meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People as a representative of Yugoslavia, current Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. Non-aligned countries have always attached

greatest importance to the question of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which have been denied for so long. The Movement's solidarity with the Palestinian people has been staunch and long lasting. It has been consistently expressed in the Movement's documents and in its efforts on the international scene, as well as in its activities within the United Nations as a whole, especially in the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Government of Yugoslavia sent a message to the Committee on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which I should like to read out now. The message reads as follows:

"The encouraging changes in today's world towards the creation of a new system of international relations have also been reflected in the Middle East region. We are observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People with justified optimism that this longest-running and most complex hotbed of crisis may be finally resolved in a peaceful way.

"The peace conference on the Middle East embarked upon recently in Madrid represents the most decisive step so far in endeavouring to find a peaceful solution to the Middle East crisis and the Palestinian question, which is at its core. It is encouraging indeed that the parties that have confronted each other for decades sat for the first time at the negotiating table and that an agreement has been reached to continue direct bilateral negotiations between Arab States and Israel.

"Only a comprehensive and just solution to the Middle East problem as a whole can bring about the lasting peace and unimpeded development of the States of the Middle East. These are the very goals advocated by the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries ever since its inception, goals to the realization of which Yugoslavia has consistently contributed its share.

"The role of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People is gaining importance in the forthcoming negotiating process, which undoubtedly will be arduous but which we expect to be beneficial.

"Yugoslavia, as current Chairman of the Movement, steadfastly supports the Committee's activities. The Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as its legitimate representative, can count on the full solidarity of Yugoslavia and of the non-aligned countries in the realization of their inalienable rights."

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

H.E. Mr. Mustafa Aksin, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey and current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers

I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, the new Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Today, 29 November, we solemnly observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People here in the United Nations and beyond, throughout the world.

The Palestinian people have been the victims of perhaps the greatest injustice inflicted on any nation in recent history. For more than four decades that people has been driven from its homes and turned into refugees, its political rights denied, its human rights massively violated, its livelihoods ruined, its daily existence rendered miserable beyond description. This brave people has endured and suffered, always nurturing the expectation that somehow the world would right the many wrongs that had been inflicted on it.

Unfortunately, the situation of the Palestinian people has progressively worsened with each successive phase of the Middle East conflict. Is it any wonder, then, that after exercising patience and restraint for so many years the Palestinians have exploded in the form of their intifadah against the injustice of an occupation that gets more oppressive with the passage of time? For four years now, we have witnessed and admired both the courage and the self-restraint of the protesters, who have defied all the measures taken by the Israeli occupiers, making their voices heard and asserting their basic rights.

On this 29 November, we must all pledge ourselves once again to strive to attain certain basic objectives. The injustice inflicted on the Palestinians must be reversed. A peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine must be sought and found. The question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, and peace and security in the region will continue to elude us unless we find a solution to this question. We pray that the positive developments of recent weeks, which culminated in the convening of the Madrid conference, will continue and that the just struggle of the Palestinian people will result in a peaceful settlement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). In this connection, I should like to pay a tribute to the statesmanship displayed by the Palestinian leadership in overcoming all the obstacles placed in their path. This statesmanship has given the Palestinians a new stature in the world, and it has also made a very significant contribution to the ongoing peace process.

The noble struggle of the Palestinian people for its inalienable rights has always enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the membership of the United Nations. That support has been forthcoming because the Palestinian struggle has been a just struggle for principles that are embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. The wide support for Palestinian rights has also been based on the firm belief that peace and security in the Middle East are dependent on justice being done to the Palestinian people.

It is this general support for the Palestinian cause that led to the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 3376 (XXX) on 10 November 1975. In that resolution the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. In the years that have elapsed since then the Committee has helped focus the attention of the international community on Palestine, carried out a very effective programme of public relations on behalf of the Palestinians and given strong backing and encouragement to their struggle for dignity and recognition. I think I can be allowed to say that all the members of the Committee are proud of the services they have rendered to a worthy cause whose ultimate objectives are justice and peace.

In recent years the Committee has had the good fortune of having as its Chairman the Permanent Representative of Senegal, Ambassador Absa Claude Diallo. Ambassador Diallo has served the Committee with great distinction and total dedication and it was with great sadness that we learned that she will be leaving us to assume other duties for her Government. We shall miss her gracious and warm personality. We shall certainly miss her diplomatic skills. Above all, we shall never forget her singular contribution to the success of the Committee and her services to the Palestinian cause. I should like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Diallo for all that she has done.

Another international body that has been a steadfast supporter of the Palestinian people is the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), on whose behalf I have the honour to address this Committee. The very existence of OIC is the result of an outrage committed against the Al Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest shrines, located in Arab Jerusalem.

Since the inception of OIC, the Palestinian people have remained at the centre of its concerns. Just how strong this concern is can be seen in the final communiqué of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held at Istanbul from 4 to 8 August 1991. I shall read out the first paragraph of the chapter in the final communiqué dealing with political affairs:

> "The Conference affirmed its active solidarity and total support for the just struggle of the valiant Palestinian people. It saluted with great pride the heroic steadfastness and immense sacrifices of the Palestinian people, the continuation and escalation of their blessed intifaḍah against the repressive practices of the Israeli forces of occupation, and their valiant resistance to its brutal and barbaric methods. It called on member States to extend all forms of political and economic support to the Palestinian people."

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I want to recall OIC's unwavering support for and complete solidarity with the Palestinian people. It is our most sincere wish to see this gifted people, the Palestinians, enjoying the blessings of peace, freedom, security and self-determination. Few people have sacrificed more to achieve these objectives. We salute its struggle and reiterate our full support.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

H.E. Mr. Muhammad El-Farra, Under-Secretary-General
for Palestinian Affairs of the League of Arab States

[Original: Arabic]

Here we meet again on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in order to declare that we are intensifying our joint efforts to apply international legality and to achieve a just solution to the problem in order to restore peace to the region.

I should like to put on record the League's appreciation, Madam Chairman, and members of the Committee, of your constant efforts to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and to put an end to its sufferings. We are grateful to you for the important role you perform personally in order to make the Palestinian cause known, to support it and to remind the international community of its responsibility towards our people.

The General Assembly resolution calling for the annual celebration of this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an expression of the interest of the General Assembly and of the entire world in Palestine and the rights of its people.

The international responsibility is all the greater in that the situation in the occupied territories has been aggravated by the inhuman policies pursued by Israel. The international community is called upon to continue its efforts to achieve the optimum peaceful solution. We hope that the international peace conference will make it possible to render justice to the Palestinian people; otherwise, Israel will continue to be a source of constant threat to the region and to international peace.

Israel is racing against time to build settlements and to completely dominate the occupied territories with all their resources. It is trying to obstruct the peace talks. Voices are being raised in Israel against the return of the land, and against the halting of the settler-colonialist programme.

The intensification of settlement is swallowing up more and more land. Settlements are proliferating like cancer all over the occupied territories. If the current negotiations between the concerned parties are to succeed, the Israel settler-colonialist programme must stop forthwith so that a healthy climate may be created for the negotiations. If the Zionist policy is allowed to pursue all its expansionist dreams, not only will extremism that defies international legality prevail, but also the situation will become more complicated, to the detriment of the rights of the Palestinian people.

We should not forget that the Israeli policy of repression remains unchanged. The policy of the "iron-fist" against the inhabitants of the occupied territories still continues with all its brutal, inhuman practices. Israel, in the name of human rights, is taking over our territories, emptying them of their legitimate inhabitants and implanting in their place immigrant populations from abroad. The Israeli occupation, with its habitual brutality and violence, goes on persecuting Palestinians in their homes, on the streets, in churches, mosques, schools and universities. It is persecuting them in the towns, in the villages and in the camps, attacking their persons, their families, their land, their beliefs, their sacred sites and their property. History teaches us that settler-colonialism is based on repression, torture and the displacement of populations. This policy of repression is inhuman. It will disappear only with the end of the occupation. For all these reasons, I restate the need for an immediate end to this colonization. We must also block all attempts at delaying tactics in the negotiations.

The occupation authorities would be mistaken if they were to think that the Palestinian people will give up its territory and its rights. New generations have already faced Israeli cruelty with unprecedented resistance. Future generations will follow their example. Men, women and children will continue to fight, and will carry on their intifadah in order to regain their legitimate national rights. Israel's arrogance, there is no doubt, leads it to defy the two super powers, the co-sponsors of the conference. It defies the international community and the efforts to build a new world order. We hope that, in the face of this defiance, we shall adopt a decisive stand that would restore justice and establish an equitable durable peace for all in the region.

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and Chairman of the Gulf Cooperation Council, delivered by H.E. Mr. Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Ni'mah, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations

[Original: Arabic]

I have been honoured by H.E. Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and current Chairman of the Gulf Cooperation Council, who has charged me with reading out his message addressed to your Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on the occasion of today's meeting on the fourteenth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

"It gives me great pleasure to participate in this celebration under the aegis of your Committee, which has made sincere and persistent efforts to support the Palestinian people, a matter which deserves our appreciation and praise. It is an occasion that allows our Governments and peoples to demonstrate our commitment to the principles of freedom and our love of peace and justice, which we hope will prevail for all peoples of the world, including the people of Palestine.

"We pay a tribute to the people of Palestine for its courage in struggling for its dignity and freedom and in defence of its legitimate national rights which have been recognized by the international community. We affirm in this gathering our solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people in resisting the aggression that has changed the lives of the Palestinians into a hell of suffering and injustice.

"The Palestinian people, which has languished under Israel's occupation of its land, has been subjected to every form of persecution, maltreatment, humiliation and injustice. And yet, it has not knuckled under to the usurper and occupier. It has rebelled, by its intifadah, against injustice. Its weapon has been its faith in the justice of its cause and the stones with which it has faced the forces of occupation in order not to play into the hands of those forces and give them the pretext of resorting to the bloody repression that they are accustomed to indulge in. In so doing, the Palestinian people has paid a high price indeed in the lives that have been lost, the innocent who have been injured or imprisoned, the houses that have been demolished and their owners who have been deported and deprived of their right to return to their land, the detainees, including children and minors, who have been tortured, in addition to all forms of discrimination on the basis of language, religion and political belief.

"The occupation forces have persisted in changing the features of Palestinian lands, have usurped the historical and cultural sites and have desecrated sacred sites in Al-Quds and other places. The latest act of desecration was their attack on the Islamic jurisprudence court in Jerusalem and confiscation of Awqaf documents in the West Bank, a matter that shocked and angered the Islamic and Arab worlds.

"The United Nations has addressed the question of Palestine and has investigated Israel's practices in the occupied territories. It has adopted a number of resolutions aimed at achieving justice for the Palestinians. However, Israel has persisted in its actions. Daily we hear statements characterized by intransigence, inflexibility and arrogance devoid of any sign of an intention to live in peace with its neighbours as Israel claims.

"As for the Palestinians and Arabs, they have all demonstrated the desired response to international endeavours to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in the Middle East. They have shown maturity, rationality and pragmatism commensurate with the objectives of peace in the region. Lately we have witnessed a significant development in the question of Palestine, that is, the peace process, which began in Madrid last October. That process is still proceeding along its planned stages aimed at eventually finding comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East region so that the peoples of this region may later on focus on the development of their societies and in building a better future for their children.

"We extend our appreciation to the Palestinian people for having accepted to participate in the peace process. They have shown their good faith, a positive spirit, flexibility and wisdom. Unfortunately, this was not reciprocated by the Israeli side, which clings to its extremist postures that run counter to the goal of peace. The Israelis persist in their rejection of the principle of 'land for peace' and in the building of illegal settlements in the occupied territories.

"The international community is waiting for the Israelis to demonstrate good faith and a genuine desire to reach the lasting peace without which the situation in the region will never be stabilized. The cause of the Palestinian people and Israel's denial of that people's inalienable rights is the crux of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Once we arrive at a solution of the question of Palestine that satisfies the aspirations of the Palestinians, the Arab States will in turn be satisfied.

"If Israel really wants to live in peace, it should withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories of not only the Gaza Strip or the West Bank, but also of Al-Quds and the Syrian Golan Heights, and southern Lebanon, in consonance with the Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the inadmissibility of the annexation of territories by force and the illegality of occupying the territories of others. Once this withdrawal takes place, the circle of peace will widen and become durable and comprehensive.

"Détente in international relations augurs well and raises hopes that all efforts made in the peace process will be crowned with the success we have long awaited. For half a century we have waited. Many lives have been lost and tremendous human and material resources have been wasted.

"The State of Qatar firmly believes that resolving the question of Palestine is the only way to achieve peace in the Middle East. Unless this question is resolved in a way that guarantees the exercise by the Palestinian people of its legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination and the right to establish its own independent State, peace will not be established in the region, and the conflict that threatens international peace and security will continue.

"The State of Qatar, given its belief in the just cause of the Palestinian people, reiterates its support for the peace conference which was launched in Madrid with the participation of all concerned parties and extends its deepest appreciation and gratitude to your Committee for the efforts it has exerted. We reaffirm once again our support for and solidarity with these efforts. We are certain that the Palestinian people, with the support of all these noble endeavours to attain the rights of the Palestinian people - the right to regain its freedom and to establish its independent State on its national soil - will definitely achieve its desired objective, namely freedom and independence."

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE

Ms. Colleen F. McGuire, Esq., of the National Lawyers Guild (United States), representing the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine

I am most honoured to greet you on behalf of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine - the ICCP. I send greetings from the ICCP office in Geneva and from the ICCP Chairman, Mr. Don Betz, who was unfortunately unable to be present today. I further send you greetings from 1,315 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout the world that are actively working on a peaceful and just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

We NGOs thank the United Nations for allowing us to address this Committee on the historic occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This past year has presented a formidable challenge to NGOs working for peace in Palestine. We witnessed an invasion and occupation of a sovereign nation this past year; I am of course referring to Iraq and Kuwait. We were stunned when a year ago today, 29 November 1990, the Security Council passed a crucial resolution. As you recall, the language of that resolution allowed the United States to interpret it to mean that it could respond with unlimited and terrorizing force against the people of Iraq. We were appalled that that resolution was passed on 29 November 1991. NGOs denounce any use of force to resolve conflicts.

We look to the United Nations to employ consistency and equity. For almost a quarter of a century there has existed another illegal occupation in the Middle East by a foreign Power over another people, and we expect the United Nations to treat Israel's 24-year-long illegal occupation of Palestine with a seriousness and resolve commensurate to that demonstrated by this body during the Gulf war. I am not suggesting, of course, that we have another resolution that allows for use of force, but - I repeat - we expect the United Nations to treat this with commensurate seriousness and resolve, because we NGOs do see a double standard with respect to Palestine, and particularly because Israel's belligerent presence in the occupied territories is immoral, illegal and racist.

I ask each governmental representative here today: How would you feel if your country had likewise been occupied for 24 years by a foreign nation? Just think how you would feel if 70 per cent of your country's land were confiscated by a foreign Power. Israel has confiscated 70 per cent of the land in the West Bank; in addition, 50 per cent of the land in Gaza has been confiscated by Israel. I do not believe that you or your people would tolerate the evisceration of your sovereign rights if your country were occupied by a foreign nation. That is why we expect the United Nations to continue playing a role in bringing about the independence of Palestine.

We NGOs unanimously recognize and support the intifadah as a national liberation struggle for the achievement of the State of Palestine and for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian people has a right to self-determination and statehood as much as the people of any country represented in this room, and there is no legitimate reason why it has had to wait this long. We NGOs vigorously support the Palestinian people's efforts to achieve this most elementary of human rights. We look to and expect the United Nations to play a continuing role in ensuring the Palestinians' right to statehood.

At the Eighth United Nations International NGO Meeting on the Question of Palestine, held in Vienna, Austria, from 28 to 30 August 1991, we NGOs affirmed our conviction that the conflict can be resolved only through an international conference under United Nations auspices at which all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), are represented on an equal footing. We denounced the United States Government's manoeuvrings to prevent an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations.

Our concerns at the August 1991 ICCP meeting were confirmed at the Madrid conference. Official PLO representatives were precluded from attending, and the role of the United Nations was exceedingly diminished. None the less, we NGOs support the current negotiations as interim steps toward the long-term goal of self-determination and statehood for the Palestinian people. We hope the negotiations enable Palestinians to obtain temporary relief from the onerous conditions inherent in a military occupation.

To mark the twenty-fourth anniversary of the occupation in June 1991, North American NGOs, with the support of ICCP in Geneva, met with ambassadors and/or representatives of 13 of the 15 States on the Security Council, and urged the members of that body to focus all their efforts on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 681 (1990).

As you all know, resolution 681 (1990) calls upon the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to ensure Israel's respect for its obligations under the Convention in accordance with article 1. In the light of resolution 681 (1990), at the Vienna meeting in August 1991, NGOs called for the establishment of a United Nations force to protect the Palestinian people from the terror and repression they face daily under occupation. It bears repeating that we consider it most urgent that the United Nations should provide immediate and sustained protection for the Palestinian people under occupation.

International NGOs have recently set up a network to coordinate the gathering and dissemination of information regarding Palestinian children. The campaign will focus on such themes as: no more Israeli violence against Palestinian children - they have a right to protection; no more closing of Palestinian schools - they have a right to education; and no more deportation of mothers and fathers - Palestinian children have a right to a family. As NGOs steadfastly pursue this campaign, we call on the United Nations, pursuant to resolution 681 (1990), likewise to take all measures to protect the children and people of Palestine.

The most pressing task immediately facing North American NGOs is to ensure that, on 10 January 1992, the United States Congress does not vote to grant Israel's request for $10 billion in loan guarantees to "absorb" Soviet Jews. It is certain that Israel will use this money to create and further expand illegal settlements on Palestinian land. These settlements unequivocally violate article 49, paragraph 6, of the Fourth Geneva Convention, prohibiting an occupying Power from transferring its citizens into occupied territories. Already Israeli Jewish citizens comprise 13 per cent of the population in the occupied territories. North American NGOs are furiously lobbying Congress to oppose this vote, which so obviously jeopardizes the peace process. At Vienna last August, ICCP called on the Security Council and all Governments to institute sanctions against Israel for its occupation and settlement policy.

We NGOs thank the United Nations for all its efforts in supporting international NGOs in the pursuit of our tasks, programmes and agendas. We deeply appreciate your confidence in our work. Inspired by the determination of the Palestinian people themselves, we shall continue our work until United Nations resolution 181 (II) is fully implemented and Palestine is a sovereign, independent nation.

Today, I noticed in the lobby of the United Nations building a lovely exhibit commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and, while perusing the statistics and facts, I realized that no mention whatever was made about which refugees had been refugees for the longest period. I think that it may be the Palestinians.

In the interest of peace and justice, for each of us who have a homeland, let us not rest until the Palestinian people secures its homeland too.

III. MESSAGES RECEIVED ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

A. Messages from heads of State or Government

BAHRAIN

His Majesty Sheikh Isa Bin Sulman Al Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain

[Original: Arabic]

Many years have passed since the Palestinian question was first raised in the international arena and since the adoption on 29 November 1947 of the resolution on partition, and the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli wars over successive decades, as a result of the Zionist expansionist designs on the Palestinian and Arab territories and the repressive Israeli practices against the Palestinian people. This tragic question continues to preoccupy and disturb international public opinion, which at last perceives in this dark and tangled conflict a glimmer of hope for a lasting, just and comprehensive solution which will put an end to the pains and suffering of the Palestinian people.

Over the past 44 years, the United Nations has adopted numerous resolutions in favour of the right to self-determination and legitimate inalienable rights, the most important of which is the right to establish an independent Palestinian State on the national soil of Palestine. These resolutions give clear expression to international legitimacy and the principles of international law. Against the background of the new world order, the credibility of these resolutions is now to be truly tested with regard to commitment to their application with respect to the Palestinian question.

The State of Bahrain reaffirms its continuing support for the valiant Palestinian international intifadah, which has continued ever since its onset in December 1987 as a concrete expression of the will of the Palestinian masses to struggle for freedom and of their insistence on achieving the right to self-determination for the Palestinian people. On the occasion of this International Day, Bahrain reaffirms its condemnation and rejection of Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and urges all States Members of the United Nations to strive earnestly and with determination to halt Jewish immigration, to remove the colonialist settlements, which are aimed at Judaizing the Palestinian homeland and obliterating its independent identity and to expose Israeli policies, which threaten peace and security in the Middle East.

Today the world is witness to and shows its great appreciation for the peaceful and persistent efforts being exerted by the United States of America, with the support and participation of the Soviet Union and the backing of the countries of the European Community, together with the leaders of the States concerned by the conflict in the Middle East. These efforts led to the convening of the Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East (30 October-4 November 1991) under the auspices of the two super powers. For the first time, this Conference provided a unique and historic opportunity for direct peaceful negotiations between all parties and enabled the Palestinian side to present its just national cause and gain international support, which underscores the need to arrive at a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian question.

The world is aware of the procrastination and prevarication engaged in by Israel and the obstacles it places on the path to peace through its obstinacy and obduracy in failing to withdraw from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories on the basis of worn-out mythical pretexts and claims prompted by its egotistical inclinations, which run counter to aspirations for the peace and security that are truly desired by the peoples of the Arab region. In their forefront is the people of Palestine, which has steadfastly withstood the thunderbolts of occupation and aggression and continues to suffer the bitterness of arbitrary rule, persecution, killing and displacement and which, through its popular and diplomatic struggle, is intent on achieving its national desires.

On this occasion, we are pleased to express on behalf of the State of Bahrain, from the tribune of the United Nations, which is striving to consolidate principles and values and raise the banner of human rights, to express our thanks and deep appreciation to the Chairman and members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for their sincere efforts in aid of the cause of this people, which is endeavouring to recover all its national rights.

BANGLADESH

H.E. Mrs. Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being observed this year in the backdrop of momentous changes in world affairs. Prospects for a breakthrough in the long outstanding Middle East problem, of which the core issue is Palestine, is brighter than ever before. The jointly sponsored United States, Soviet Union peace conference, recently concluded in Madrid, has demonstrated the positive attitude taken by the Arab and Palestinian representatives. It is our hope that the momentum will be maintained for continuation of the second phase of bilateral talks.

Bangladesh's commitment to the Palestinian cause is unwavering. We resolutely stand by the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly calling, inter alia, for the vacation of all the Arab territories occupied by Israel, for the restoration of the inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to a State of its own, and the restoration of Holy Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty. Together with the international community, Bangladesh has consistently rejected the establishment of settlements, the induction of Jewish immigrants and all measures to change the political, social, cultural and demographic status of the occupied territories. Bangladesh has also repeatedly condemned the violation of basic human rights of the Palestinian people and the continuation by Israel of its brutal repression against the intifadah, which has now entered the fifth year. The Palestinian resistance has testified to the absolute rejection of any imposed status quo by Israel.

Bangladesh has welcomed the peace initiative now under way and earnestly hopes that this process for settling the problem through dialogue and negotiation is not frustrated and will lead to a just, comprehensive and durable settlement. On this auspicious occasion, we reiterate our firm support to and solidarity with our Palestinian brethren.

BULGARIA

H.E. Dr. Zhelyu Zhelev, President of the Republic of Bulgaria

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People provides me with this opportunity once again to address you and extend to you my congratulations and best wishes.

Now, when the ongoing Madrid Peace Conference on the Middle East inspires the hope of finding a just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian problem and of achieving the long aspired-for peace for the Arab people of Palestine, I would like to reconfirm our country's willingness to cooperate actively in this process.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

H.E. Mr. André Kolingba, President and head of State of the Central African Republic

[Original: French]

The celebration on 29 November of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People affords me the opportunity of reaffirming once again the support of the Central African Republic for the struggle being waged by that people for the restoration of its national rights.

This struggle, manifested, inter alia, through the intifadah, is today developing in ways which are indeed in conformity with the expectations of the Central African Republic, which welcomes the representation of representatives of the Palestinian people in the work of the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference, but in order fully to succeed, it still requires more support from the international community.

Although the Conference aroused among countries like the Central African Republic legitimate hopes regarding the early prospects for a settlement of the question, we should not lose sight of the fact that this road to peace that we are seeking is still beset with obstacles associated with stubbornness and accumulated rancour that only genuine political will is capable of reducing.

The Government of the Central African Republic hopes that the celebration of this Day, with which it fully associates itself, will be the occasion for a demonstration of such political will that the forthcoming meeting on the Middle East, scheduled to take place next month, will constitute a decisive stage on the road to a settlement of the Middle East question, and hence of the question of Palestine.

CHINA

H.E. Mr. Li Peng, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China

On the occasion of the convocation of the meeting to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to extend, on behalf of the Chinese Government and people, warm congratulations to the meeting and to pay high tribute to the Palestinian people.

Since the last meeting, major changes have taken place in the situation of the Middle East. The relevant parties and the international community have made major efforts to propel the Middle East peace process forward in search of a fair and reasonable settlement of the question of Palestine. The convening of the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid marked the beginning of a new phase of the Middle East peace process. It was a good start for a political settlement of the Middle East question, with the question of Palestine as its crux. The Palestinian people have waged protracted and heroic struggles to restore its legitimate national rights and made valuable efforts for a political settlement of the question of Palestine, thus winning high praise from the Chinese Government and people.

The Chinese Government and people have consistently and resolutely supported the Palestinian people in its just struggle for the restoration of its legitimate national rights. We maintain that the question of Palestine should be settled in a fair and reasonable way in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people should be restored, the occupied Arab territories returned and, meanwhile, the sovereignty and security of Israel should also be respected and guaranteed. We hope that substantive progress will be made at the negotiations started at the Peace Conference in Madrid. Together with the international community, China is ready to make its own contributions to the ultimate fair and reasonable settlement of the Palestinian issue and the Middle East issue in general and the realization of peace and tranquility in that region.

CUBA

H.E. Mr. Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Council of State and Government of the Republic of Cuba

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to reiterate the steadfast support of the people and Government of Cuba for the Palestinian people in its struggle for the exercise of its inalienable rights.

It would be difficult to find another nation which at any time has had to face such a singular injustice as has the Palestinian people, despoiled of the land that was its home for millennia, and condemned to live in wandering or under neo-colonial domination.

The intifadah waged by the Palestinians under the leadership of their sole legitimate representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, for almost four years, during which women and children have each day rivalled men in heroic acts, is unequivocal evidence of their unflinching will to fight. To them, our admiration and solidarity.

I reaffirm to you, Madam Chairman, our consideration and the assurance that you may count on Cuba to support the objectives of the Committee over which you so ably preside.

CYPRUS

H.E. Mr. George Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I reiterate once again, on behalf of the Government and the people of Cyprus, and myself, our firm and unwavering support to the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people for freedom, justice and human dignity.

On this important occasion, we join the international community in reaffirming our solidarity with the people of Palestine in its quest for restoration of its inalienable national rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent and sovereign State. It is high time for these rights to be restored and respected by all and for justice to be done to the Palestinian people.

A just and viable solution of the question of Palestine can be attained only through the implementation of the relevant United Nations resolutions which contain all the necessary elements for a durable settlement, in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. Lasting peace in the Middle East will be achieved only if an agreement can be reached, bringing about an end to the sufferings and hardships of the Palestinian people.

That is why Cyprus welcomes the forthcoming second phase of the Middle East peace talks as a move in the right direction and expresses the strong hope that this stage will lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement, contributing to peace and security in the region. I hope and wish that these initiatives may be crowned with success.

EGYPT

H.E. Mohamed Hosni Mubarak, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

[Original: Arabic]

First of all, I am pleased to convey my thanks to you and to all the members of the Committee for the great effort you have exerted in promoting awareness of the just cause of the Palestinian people and the valuable support you have shown for its struggle to achieve its just demands and its legitimate rights within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and international legitimacy.

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People comes amid historical developments and changes to which the whole world is witness and at an extremely delicate stage in the history of the Middle East. The peoples and countries of this region, which is the cradle of the three celestial religions, have not yet been blessed with the just and lasting peace which they deserve and to which they aspire.

Egypt has always expressed its deep conviction that a just and comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian question is the only way to attain peace in the Middle East and to achieve for the peoples of the region the stability and security which will allow them to devote their energies to the development and construction of their societies. This conviction has been the basis for Egypt's support for the Palestinian people aimed at enabling it to exercise its legitimate rights.

The Palestinian people has endured an unending cycle of daily sacrifices, tribulations and suffering. The Palestinian intifadah in the occupied territories is one episode in the struggle which over the years has been aimed at achieving the hopes of the Palestinian people for a life of freedom and dignity.

The continuing march of the Palestinian people over these long years demonstrates to us that the rights of peoples do not become null and void with time and that Palestinian aspirations for peace and justice will endure as long as the Palestinian people remains deprived of its legitimate rights, including the right to self-determination.

The current international circumstances have created a unique opportunity to solve the problem of the Middle East. At the end of last October there occurred what was by all standards an historic event, when a peace conference was convened at Madrid under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union, in which all the parties to the Middle East question participated, including representatives of the Palestinian people and of numerous Arab and European countries, as well as a representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This event will, beyond doubt, prove an important starting-point from which to strengthen sincere international efforts to initiate a peace process in the Middle East. At the same time, it constitutes a first step in the building of understanding and dialogue between the peoples of the region in an attempt to achieve a lasting peace there on the basis of the true meaning of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which is the restitution of the occupied Arab land to its rightful owners in exchange for peace, security and stability for all States and peoples of the region.

Egypt believes that all the parties should seize this unique opportunity and use it as a basis for achieving a just solution to the Palestinian question. The international community must support the parties concerned and encourage them to overcome the obstacles to a peaceful solution. Egypt is confident in the ability of the international community to assume its historic responsibilities in this respect, and this should create suitable conditions for the achievement of a just and lasting settlement founded on respect for the principles of international law and the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations and recognition of the legitimate political and national rights of the Palestinian people.

The principles on which the United Nations was established, in particular the right of peoples to self-determination and the exercise of their basic rights, are principles which must be applied equally to all the peoples of the region. The Palestinian people is still looking forward with confidence and pride to a better future when it may exercise its inalienable right to self-determination.

Finally, I should like to reiterate my thanks to your esteemed Committee and to assure you and all the members of the Committee of our appreciation and support for your sincere and noble efforts.

GHANA

H.E. Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings, head of State and
Chairman of the Provisional National Defence Council of Ghana

On this solemn occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I extend on behalf of the people and Government of Ghana, warm felicitations to the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its remarkable efforts aimed at informing and sensitizing public opinion about the plight of the people of Palestine. The occasion calls for the collective renewal of international commitment and solidarity as well as support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and independence.

The Palestinian question, which remains at the core of the Middle East problem, is the result of the continued denial of freedom and justice to the Palestinian people, 43 years after the establishment of the State of Israel. This denial that has also been characterized by untold human suffering, particularly in the occupied territories, imposes a moral duty on the United Nations and the entire international community to work assiduously for a quick and durable settlement of the problem.

In this connection, Ghana welcomes the ongoing Middle East talks which have been started in Madrid, Spain, sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union, aimed at finding a common ground between the Arab countries and Israel, and at finding an end to the human tragedy in occupied Palestine. We wish to stress, with regard to this new international effort, the need to ensure equity and justice for the Palestinian people. The principles underlying various United Nations resolutions, especially resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) on the question of Palestine and the Middle East cannot be overlooked in this worthy endeavour.

It is a matter of deep regret, that at a time when the international community is struggling to replace confrontation and conflict in the Middle East with dialogue and negotiations, the Israeli authorities are continuing with the expansionist settlement policy in the occupied territories. Such settlements have constituted the excuse for the deportation of Palestinians from their homeland at a time when the Palestinian National Council is calling for détente through withdrawal from Palestinian lands. The land-for-peace policy should provide an adequate means for a more effective peaceful solution of the entire Middle East problem.

On this important occasion, Ghana reaffirms its unflinching commitment and support for the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and wishes it every success in its endeavours. We also extend our sincere best wishes and solidarity with the Palestinian people in its just struggle for peace in its homeland.

GUINEA

H. E. Mr. Lansana Conte, President of the Interim Council for National Recovery, head of State and President of the Republic of Guinea

[Original: French]

As the international community prepares to celebrate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, it is a particular pleasure for me to express to you the importance the people and Government of Guinea attach to the Palestinian question, which is at the very heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, of which my country is proud to be a member, has made commendable efforts to put an end to the painful conflict in the Middle East and initiate the process of searching for a lasting and comprehensive peace. This peace, which the entire community of nations devoutly wishes, entails respect for the principles of international law governing relations among all States of the region, and particularly for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, which is currently being prevented from attaining them. Rest assured of my country's unswerving support for the persistent and courageous activity of the United Nations, as well as for the negotiations under way aimed at arriving at a definitive setulement of one of this century's most protracted international conflicts.

INDIA

H.E. Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister of India

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I take this opportunity once again to pledge India's friendship and unity with the Palestinian people and to reiterate our unequivocal commitment to and support for the Palestinian cause. India has always maintained that without a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East there can be no durable peace or stability in the region.

The reactivation of the peace process and the positive response of all the concerned parties to this initiative are important and welcome developments. It is particularly gratifying that the centrality of the Palestinian issue to the Middle East problem is at last receiving due recognition by all concerned. We sincerely hope that the process of dialogue which has been launched will culminate in the restoration to the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights for which it has struggle hard and long and an equitable resolution of the Palestinian problem.

I reaffirm India's continued and unstinted support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

INDONESIA

H.E. Mr. Soeharto, President of the Republic of Indonesia

On this yearly commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on behalf of the Government and people of Indonesia, I would like to reaffirm our unswerving support for the Palestinians, in the heroic struggle for the restoration of their inalienable rights to self-determination. Their steadfast resistance and great sacrifices in the face of the brutal terror and reprisal by Israel have earned for them the respect, recognition and support of the international community.

The annual observance of this Day of Solidarity takes place at a time when the world is undergoing rapid and fundamental changes. Many of these changes have given rise to heightened expectations of a new era in international relations and revived hopes for greater peace and more equitably spread prosperity in the world. Yet, these bright prospects and opportunities continue to be sharply contrasted by the emergence of new and the persistence of old problems, by unprecedented challenges, pervasive uncertainties and unresolved inequities. Indonesia firmly believes that if we are to build a viable new world order, then it should be a new world order based on justice, security, peace, democracy both within and among States, and on the promotion of the fundamental rights of nations as well as the individual human being.

The enlarged opportunities being presented to us by the changed global environment should therefore be seized and sustained efforts need to be deployed to accelerate progress on the fundamental issues that have always been at the core of the Middle East conflict, namely, the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization as its sole and legitimate representative, to secure its inalienable rights to self-determination and independence in its own land, with Jerusalem as its capital, as well as the withdrawal of Israel from all illegally occupied Palestinian and Arab lands.

Israel has now adopted an even more rigid position towards any efforts to achieve a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict. In this regard, Indonesia welcomes the current initiative undertaken by the United States to start a restricted peace conference on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, and we note the constructive response by the Arab countries directly concerned. However, we do have serious misgivings regarding some aspects of the proposed negotiating format, in particular, Israel's arrogation of the right to determine the nature and composition of Palestinian representation. We continue to believe that ultimately the International Peace Conference, as called for by General Assembly resolution 38/58 C remains the most viable negotiating framework within which all the essential elements for a just settlement could be comprehensively addressed. And to be comprehensive, such a solution should necessarily include the restoration of Syrian sovereignty over the Golan as well as the complete withdrawal of all Israeli occupation forces from southern Lebanon.

I would like to re-emphasize the crucial role of the intifadah in the Palestinian struggle to achieve their legitimate rights. The events, as they have continued to unfold over the course of the past years in Palestine and on the international diplomatic front, demonstrate conclusively that there is nothing episodic to the intifadah. Having withstood every attempt to contain or suppress it, the intifadah constitutes irrefutable proof of the indomitable spirit and absolute faith of the Palestinian people to attain the restoration of its inalienable national rights.

In this context, I should like to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his tireless efforts to find a peaceful, just and lasting settlement to the conflict in the Middle East. Likewise, Indonesia is deeply appreciative of the dedicated and effective manner in which the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People has discharged its noble and humane mission.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that the Palestinian cause for justice and peace and their struggle for national liberation will emerge triumphant.

May God Almighty bestow His blessing and wise guidance on all of us.

IRAN, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF

H.E. Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is an opportunity for me to express my own most sincere and brotherly feelings, as well as those of all the Iranian people, to the people of Palestine and to wish it success in its heroic struggle against the occupying Power.

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran has expressed its desire for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State throughout Palestine, with Beit-ul-Moqaddas as its capital, and will spare no effort in supporting the Palestinian people in achieving its goal.

The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the key to the solution of the question of Palestine, as the focal point of the Middle East crisis, lies in the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination and sovereignty throughout the occupied territories.

We condemn the aggressive measures carried out by the occupying regime of Al-Quds, and once again express our concern over the continued transgression of international law, the persistent violation of human rights, as well as the immigration and settlement of Jews in the occupied territories, the cost of which is the displacement of the oppressed Palestinians.

As part of our administration for the glorious intifadah, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people cannot be compromised and this holy uprising will impart a strong lesson to the aggressors.

Since the Moslem Ummah attaches great importance to the question of Palestine, and the Palestinian people has demonstrated its firm determination in achieving its goal, the liberation of Al-Quds, despite the plots and conspiracies of world arrogance, is imminent.

We pray to Almighty God for the grandeur and prosperity of the heroic people of Palestine.

IRAQ

H.E. Mr. Saddam Hussein, President of the Republic of Iraq

[Original: Arabic]

This year, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People assumes special significance in view of the developments which have taken place regarding the Palestinian cause and the international situation in general. We therefore avail ourselves of this opportunity to express our appreciation for the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to affirm the resolve of the Iraqi people and Government to continue supporting the Palestinian people and its just struggle to achieve its legitimate aims and inalienable rights. Our affirmation is made this year despite the blockade and other unjust measures imposed on Iraq by the United States of America and its supporters under the pretext of so-called international legitimacy.

The experiences of the Iraqi and Palestinian peoples have revealed to the world, in a manner which leaves no room for doubt, the double standards employed by the United States and its supporters in interpreting the resolutions and laws adopted by the United Nations. In the current attempts to settle the issue, that much is clear from the exclusion of the Palestine Liberation Organization and the refusal to recognize it as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. It is also equally clear from the fact that the United Nations itself has been excluded from undertaking any role in resolving the issue, from the consequent disregard for those of its resolutions which affirm the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and from the lack of action taken to oblige the Zionist entity to comply with United Nations resolutions calling for the withdrawal of the Israeli occupation forces from Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem, and to halt the Jewish settlements therein.

At a time when a campaign is being launched by the United States and the West to render even conventional weapons inaccessible to the countries of the region and when an ardent crusade is being conducted against Iraq, the hostile and expansionist Zionist regime is being permitted to keep various weapons of mass destruction, including its nuclear arsenal.

Right and justice demand that any fair person should reject the dual-standard policy and urge the international community to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy regarding the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab-Zionist struggle. Until such time as international legitimacy is applied in respect of the Palestinian cause, we shall seek support for the staunch Palestinian people and its struggle represented by the popular uprising. It is this intifadah which embodies the Palestinian people's rejection of the policy of occupation, settlement, repression and expulsion practiced by the Zionist entity, in addition to the Palestinian will and its determination to exercise the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to its homeland and its self-determination on Palestinian soil.

JORDAN

His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

[Original: Arabic]

The annual commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People takes place this year in the context of extremely important international developments, the like of which the Palestinian cause has not witnessed since the first violation of Palestinian national rights on the land of their forefathers, Palestine. At the end of last October, the Middle East Peace Conference, convened in Madrid under the auspices of the two super powers as a start along the road to a comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which embody the international consensus on the essence of the just and honourable political settlement represented in "the return of the occupied Arab territories in return for the security and recognition of Israel".

Recognizing the central role of the Palestinian issue in the Arab-Israeli dispute and seeking to redress the oppression and injustice suffered by the Palestinians at the hand of Israel, the Conference outlined a Palestinian-Israeli course in which both parties, within one year of the start of the peace process at the beginning of this month, are to agree on the arrangements for a transitional period during which the Palestinian people is to exercise its natural right to control its resources and administer its affairs in preparation for the exercise of its self-determination, in which the concluding stage of the peace process should culminate.

We were pleased to see such a positive development concerning the Palestinian cause which, following international détente, has evidenced scope for cooperation between international forces whose relations were, until recently, marked by rivalry. Nevertheless, we cannot be over-optimistic at this early stage. The international changes represented in the end of the cold war and the ensuing positive trends towards strengthening the foundations of world peace have eliminated the structural obstacle to resolving the Palestinian issue and applying international legitimacy. Such positive changes, however, have not yet been accompanied by a parallel change in the ideology governing the policy of the present Israeli leadership towards the Arab-Israeli struggle. At a time when the Arab States and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, have been favourable towards the efforts of third parties to convene the Peace Conference, Israel has remained entrenched behind its uncompromising positions embodied in its policy based on the two elements of force and denial, particularly its denial of the national rights of the Palestinian people and its rejection of the equation of "land for peace". The strongest evidence for this is Israel's pursuit of its settlement policy in the occupied territories, despite the air of peace which has begun to settle over the region itself and the world alike.

I therefore state that there is a need for a wide and comprehensive process of education in Israel regarding the importance of peace in order to help it break out of its "siege mentality".

Perhaps the other most striking evidence of Israel's position of shunning the trends towards peace is its determination to ensure that the United Nations, the international institution representing the basic framework for international cooperation, remains on the fringes of the diplomatic action accompanying the current peace process, which is regarded as one of the more notable aspects of cooperation between East and West at the present time.

However, even if the United Nations takes no direct part in supervising negotiations between the different parties, it cannot continue to play only a marginal role in this field. The Security Council is still the organ concerned with maintaining international peace and security, while United Nations resolutions remain the true expression of international legitimacy. As the guardian of international legitimacy with responsibility for international peace and security, the United Nations should also have final responsibility for fostering the Palestinian cause. We therefore believe that the United Nations, including your esteemed Committee, can uphold the peace process and offer a great deal towards its success. The essence of that process must be the enforcement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, which you have made a basic objective of your tireless and devoted activities for over a decade.

In addition, we hope that the peace process and the current negotiations will steer a political and ethical course which reflects legitimacy and justice rather than considerations of military force. The States of the region would then be able to abandon the arms race; the desire to live side by side would not be frustrated; and neither the valuable efforts exerted to set the peace process in motion nor the good intentions of many would disappear in the complex tangle of Israel's defiant wish to impose a fait accompli.

The Palestinian people has suffered and has been oppressed a great deal, and serious violations have been perpetrated in its regard which are inconsistent with human rights and the principles of international law. The time has therefore come for a united effort to ensure that the Palestinian people receives justice, particularly now that it is extending its hand, without reservation, to achieve a just peace and has agreed to negotiate directly with Israel, which has been advocating such negotiation since the war of June 1967.

For our part, on the basis of our faith in the justice of Palestinian demands and in accordance with our national obligations and the historic ties between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples, we have done our utmost to support the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people and to defend its rights and interests in our concern to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute and to solve the Palestinian issue in accordance with international legitimacy. The most recent example of this national and principled obligation of ours towards our Arab Palestinian people was our agreement to enter the current peace process together in the form of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Jordan, which has no hesitation in making sacrifices for the sake of its brothers in their ordeal, regards the action it has taken as a national Jordanian stand and a national duty exemplifying the closeness of the brother peoples in Jordan and Palestine, who together recorded the epic of steadfastness and who are now looking forward to painting the picture of peace together.

May peace by upon you and the mercy of God and His blessings.

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

H.E. Mr. Kaysone Phomvihane, President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

[Original: French]

On the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I should like to express to you on behalf of the Lao Government and people my warmest greetings to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and, on the same occasion, to reaffirm our indefatigable support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to recover its legitimate national rights, and in particular the right to self-determination.

This year, the celebration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is taking place at a time when détente and cooperation among States continue to dominate the world scene. A number of regional conflicts, some of them extremely complex, have thus been resolved, and many others are progressing towards a solution. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that no honourable solution can be found to the question of Palestine, which is now more than three decades old. Israel continues its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory and the other Arab territories. The occupying power is stepping up its acts of brutal oppression and repression against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, in the hope of breaking the will of this martyred people to exercise its rights to self-determination and national independence. The international community should do everything to ensure that such inhuman acts of repression practiced by Israel against the innocent civilian population come to an immediate halt.

The problem of the Middle East, at the heart of which lies the Palestinian question, has lasted too long, and calls for an urgent, comprehensive, just and lasting solution. In this context, the Lao People's Democratic Republic considers the recent convening at Madrid of the Middle East Peace Conference as an important step which may open the way towards direct negotiations among the various parties concerned. It is our sincere hope that the Palestinian problem, like many other problems, although complex, can thus be rapidly resolved in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 December 1973 and with the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination.

MALAYSIA

H.E. Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia

The commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People has taken on special significance this year coming just after the first phase of the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid. The Government and people of Malaysia had welcomed the Madrid conference and would rally with the international community for the follow-up meetings aimed at unsnarling the Arab-Israeli conflict. We fully support the solidarity and coordination amongst the Arab participants at the conference. We congratulate the excellent constructive role played by the Palestinian delegation in Madrid, with guidance support emanating from the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Palestinian struggle continues both at the negotiating table and in the intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory.

No amount of further intransigence or delay by Israel will take away the promise of Madrid and the expectations thereafter from the international community. Israel stands more than ever exposed in its obduracy and denial of the principle of exchanging territory for peace. The fundamental issues are that much more undeniable; the building of settlements in illegally occupied lands that much more unacceptable. Even among the people of Israel, too, contradictions will build up. Peace with justice and secure borders must be allowed to happen in the Middle East. The Government of Israel cannot miss this critical opportunity.

Malaysia would also like to take this opportunity to commend the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its important role in championing the rights of the Palestinian people. We wish to confirm our continued support for the Committee in bringing together the international community in fighting for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

MALTA

H.E. Dr. Edward Fenech Adami, Prime Minister of Malta

On the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, on behalf of the Government and people of Malta, I wish to send our expression of abiding solidarity and support to the Palestinian people in its continuing endeavour to exercise its inalienable rights. Malta has always been steadfast in its commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people and sees in the peaceful achievement of its legitimate objectives the essential path to genuine security and prosperity for all States in the Middle East.

This year's observance comes at a time when hopes are beginning to be raised for some positive movement on the question of Palestine. Recent development in international relations have evolved creative opportunities for dialogue and understanding. These opportunities are being seized also in respect of the whole set of problems relating to the Middle East. We sincerely hope that the Peace Conference, launched recently in Madrid, will be pursued with vigour and steadfastness by all parties concerned in order to achieve a just and lasting solution to all the issues involved, including the peaceful enjoyment by the Palestinian people of its inalienable rights.

NIGERIA

H.E. General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

On behalf of the Government and people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I wish to express warmest greetings to the Palestinian people on this special occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This day, we remind ourselves about the just struggle and the price the Palestinian people are paying in order to achieve a lasting peace which would enable it to recover its inalienable national rights, including the right to return to its homeland, the right to self-determination and the establishment of its own independent Palestinian State.

The Government and people of Nigeria remain steadfast in their support for the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people to a homeland in peace and freedom. They, therefore, add their voice to the many voices in the international community in urging the occupying power to allow the Palestinians to exercise their right to self-determination, and the full enjoyment of their basic freedoms.

Recent developments in the world and, in particular, the end of the cold war, should open a wider window of opportunity in the search for a just and lasting solution to the Middle East problem which has confronted the international community for many decades. In this regard, the Government and people of Nigeria welcome the recently concluded Middle East Peace Conference, held in Madrid, and hope that all parties to the conflict will pursue efforts in good faith, leading to a peaceful resolution of the problem in the interest of international peace and security.

PAKISTAN

H.E. Mr. Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan joins the international community today in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. Pakistan has consistently supported the Palestinian people in its struggle to achieve its national rights which include its right to return, to self-determination and to an independent State in Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

We pay a tribute to the courageous decision of the Palestinian leadership to participate in the Peace Conference which recently commenced in Madrid. Their willingness to engage in negotiations, in spite of conditions on matters relating to the agenda of the talks and the composition of their delegation, indicates their sincerity in working for a fair and just settlement.

Pakistan is strongly opposed to Israel's regrettable attempts to change the demographic status of the occupied territories, through massive settlement of Jewish immigrants.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan and on my own behalf, I renew our pledge of continued and unequivocal support to, and solidarity with, our Palestinian brothers in their valiant struggle to achieve their inalienable rights. We call upon the international community to insist that Israel end its repression in the occupied territories and to ensure that it complies with the United Nations resolutions which have repeatedly called for the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

PHILIPPINES

H.E. Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino, President of the Republic of the Philippines

The Philippine Government and the Filipino people join the United Nations and the international community in this year's commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We have always held the view that a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which is the question of Palestine, could be achieved only through peaceful means. In this regard, we welcome and support the peace process begun in Madrid. It is our fervent hope that all the parties concerned will avail themselves of this historic opportunity to find a negotiated solution to the conflict.

The outcome of the current peace process would need time to take shape. Meanwhile, the sad plight of the Palestinians, particularly those living in the occupied territories, continues to require urgent attention. We commend the efforts of the donor countries, the United Nations and other international humanitarian organizations, in addressing this problem.

We join the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its abiding faith in the justice and eventual vindication of the Palestinian cause to exercise its inalienable rights, including its right to self-determination.

SENEGAL

H.E. Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal

[Original: French]

This year the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being celebrated at a time when the international community is endeavouring to take maximum advantage of the end of the cold war in order to foster a world-wide atmosphere of confidence, cooperation and solidarity among all nations.

This desire to forge a new kind of international relations lets the world place great hope in current initiatives to find a peaceful and lasting solution to regional conflicts, of which Palestine is a prime example.

While the Middle East Peace Conference held recently at Madrid clearly does not comply fully with the recommendations contained in the numerous relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and Security Council, it has indeed been of great value in ensuring a direct dialogue between all the parties concerned.

It is therefore important that this important advance be preserved and consolidated so that the Palestinian people, which has endured too much for too long, may at last exercise its inalienable rights to self-determination and independence freely, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The resolution of the Palestinian question sought by all peace- and justice-loving countries calls for a firmer and more coherent stand on the part of the international community and a greater commitment from the Israeli authorities.

The Israeli authorities must at last understand that, in obstinately seeking to perpetuate their illegal occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, they will only place their security, the security of all countries of the region and world peace in jeopardy.

It is thus time for them to renounce their current violent and threatening practices and to commit themselves resolutely to the current peace process to help ensure its success.

Then the international community could cease to deplore, year after year, the bloody repression of the intifadah, which has entailed the killing and wounding of children and the detention of thousands of Palestinians, and has had adverse consequences for young Palestinians deprived of schooling and a wholesome environment.

I should also like to take this occasion to pay a well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, for his constant support for the heroic struggle that the valiant Palestinian people has continued to wage for many long years under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole and authentic representative.

Congratulations and encouragements are extended to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, non-governmental organizations and all who support this noble cause.

In the final weeks of 1991, a year marked by many gains, international public opinion anxiously looks for the winds of freedom, reconciliation and peace which are blowing throughout the world to reach the Middle East at last, in order to promote a happy solution to the sorry Palestinian problem, thereby enabling all the peoples of that region to live in peace, security and perfect harmony.

SPAIN

H.E. Mr. Felipe Gonzales, Prime Minister of Spain

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Spanish Government reaffirms its strong support for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict in the Middle East that will enable the Palestinian people freely to exercise its legitimate rights, particularly its right to self-determination.

The Spanish Government is gravely concerned at the situation in the occupied territories and therefore calls for the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, which should form the basis for any negotiated solution of the fundamental problem, as well as immediate compliance with the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

It is the Spanish Government's hope that the negotiating process started at the Madrid Conference will lead to a peace based on justice, which will enable all the States of the region to live within recognized boundaries and ensure that all the peoples of the region enjoy their inalienable national rights.

SRI LANKA

H.E. Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

I am pleased once again to associate myself with the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This year's commemoration takes place in the wake of certain hopeful developments that are taking place towards a comprehensive settlement of the Palestinian issue.

The Palestinian issue is at the core of the Middle East problem and peace will not return to the region unless there is a settlement based on the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied territories.

The people of Palestine have undergone immense suffering in the past decades and it is its courage and fervent commitment to regain its national rights that have sustained it.

Sri Lanka has consistently supported the just struggle of the people of Palestine to regain its homeland. My Government was among the first to recognize the State of Palestine. We will not waver in our support to find a comprehensive settlement to this issue.

The recent developments following the Madrid Conference have given hope that peace will return to the region. It is our sincere wish that the peace process will continue so that the Palestinian people will achieve its cherished goals before long.

The people of and Government of Sri Lanka join me in extending our best wishes to the people of Palestine in its efforts to gain peace.

SURINAME

H.E. Mr. Runaldo R. Venetiaan, President of the Republic of Suriname

On the occasion of the commemoration of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we, the Government and people of the Republic of Suriname, would like to reiterate our continued support on the steadfast struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of its just and inalienable rights.

My Government welcomes the dialogue started in Madrid and expresses the hope that this dialogue will ultimately result in the peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive solution of the conflict in the Middle East, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

THAILAND

H.E. Mr. Anand Panyarachun, Prime Minister of Thailand

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to reiterate the firm and continuing support of the Thai Government and people for the just and legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Thailand remains deeply concerned about the intifadah in the occupied Arab territories, in its struggle for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. Thailand calls upon all the parties involved to exercise their maximum restraint in dealing with the civilian uprising in the occupied territories. In this respect, Thailand believes that the Middle East Peace Conference, held in Madrid from 30 October to 1 November 1991 under the auspices of the United States and the Soviet Union, has paved the way for all the parties concerned to settle their disputes and achieves lasting peace and stability in the region. We hope that through the spirit of compromise of all the parties concerned, the Israeli-Arab and Israeli-Palestinian direct talks will eventually bring about the realization of the Palestinians' right to self-determination and their right to a homeland.

Last but not least, I wish to take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the invaluable efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. As for Thailand, which is an observer in the work of this Committee, it stands ready to do whatever it can in support of the Committee's commendable endeavour to promote the just cause of the Palestinian people.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

H.E. Mr. Arthur Napoleon Raymond Robinson, Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago

Today, the international community observes the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is convinced that the question of Palestine, including the issue of a homeland for the Palestinian people, has been on the agenda of the United Nations for too long and cries out for a just, comprehensive and durable solution.

The recent events in the Middle East, which culminated in the Gulf war, demonstrate that the problems of the region if left unattended can have disastrous consequences thereby threatening international peace and security and retarding economic growth and development.

The reduction of global tension and superpower rivalry has allowed fundamental and profound changes to take place in the international landscape and creates a window of opportunity for the international community to begin to resolve the question of Palestine. The peace process, which recently began in Madrid involving all parties in the Middle East under the co-sponsorship of the United States of America and the Soviet Union, is a welcome start. It must be encouraged to bear fruit by the international community. Trinidad and Tobago adds its voice to all peace-loving countries and peoples who have exhorted the parties involved to display goodwill and flexibility and to eschew long-standing mistrust and hatred.

We in Trinidad and Tobago are hopeful that in the near future the Middle East peace process will yield a just and lasting settlement to a conflict which for decades has fostered instability and brought immense suffering to the peoples of the region. Trinidad and Tobago remains convinced that peace and stability will be achieved in the Middle East only when the Palestinian people enjoys its inalienable right to its own homeland and to pursue its future in dignity and freedom.

TUNISIA

H.E. Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia

[Original: Arabic]

Together with the other peace-loving peoples and forces which adhere to the principles of justice and freedom, Tunisia salutes the fourteenth anniversary of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

On this occasion, being wholeheartedly devoted to international legitimacy, human rights and dignity for all men, Tunisia reiterates its continuing support and full backing for the Palestinian people, and its defence of that people's right to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State on the territory of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Tunisia also salutes all the justice-loving organizations and forces which support this just cause and endeavour to promote it and make it better known, first and foremost of which is the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. We commend the outstanding efforts which the members of the Committee have constantly exerted to provide unceasing moral support for the cause of the Palestinian people, which continues to labour under the iniquitous Israeli occupation and to suffer from persecution, repression, displacement and arbitrary rule. The assiduous work which the Committee has never failed to perform in order to heighten international public awareness and inform people of the real suffering endured by the Palestinian people in the occupied territories is worthy of the greatest admiration, praise and support.

As we note with satisfaction the success of those whose sincere determination has been able to mobilize the partisans of the rights of the Palestinian people in support of its steadfastness within the territories in defence of its land and existence, we salute with admiration the valiant intifadah of the Palestinian peoples in defence of its land and its right to existence and liberation. We also salute the Palestinian leadership, which has once again demonstrated at the first round of the Peace Conference convened at Madrid its lofty sense of responsibility and its desire to ensure suitable conditions for the success of the peace process, which is based on the principles of international legitimacy and the implementation of Security Council resolutions, in particular 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Tunisia was among the first to call for the convening of this Conference, which is based on legitimacy and aimed at the liberation of the Arab land in accordance with the principle of land for peace. Tunisia will continue its support and its participation in all generous and sincere efforts to help the Palestinian people to recover its legitimate rights and to ensure for it and all inhabitants of the region the just, lasting and comprehensive peace to which they aspire, thus allowing them to devote themselves to construction and development.

On this occasion, we reiterate our conviction that the cause of the Palestinian people is at the centre of the conflict in the Middle East and that only a peaceful solution to that problem, in response to the aspirations of the struggling Palestinian people, can guarantee the return of security and stability to this region, which has long suffered the misfortunes and calamities of war.

At this very time when we perceive positive signs that encourage further pursuit of the peace process and give rise to hope that the desire for peace will prevail, we urge all the organizations and great powers to respond to Israel's continuing aggressive behaviour against the Palestinian people and the neighbouring Arab States, in the hope that a rapid end may be put to such behaviour, which is aimed at provocation and obstruction of the peace process.

We are deeply gratified that this process, with its own internal dynamic, has begun, and we commend yet again the continuing efforts of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and express the appreciation of Tunisia to its members for their constructive role and to the United Nations, which is ever the champion of freedom, peace and progress.

TURKEY

H.E. Mr. Süleyman Demirel, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People which coincides this year with the important development of the initiation of the Middle East peace process, I take great pleasure in reiterating once more, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, our firm support for and solidarity with the valiant Palestinian people in its just struggle for the achievement of its legitimate rights, including that of self-determination.

It is, indeed, a source of great pleasure for us to see that the efforts of the international community, aimed at finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian question, but unfortunately doomed to failure for the last 43 years owing to the intransigent policy of Israel, have finally borne fruit and the Middle East Peace Conference has at long last convened in Madrid on 30 October 1991, under the co-sponsorship of the United States and the USSR and with the participation, for the first time, of all the parties directly concerned with the conflict.

As we have also stressed on many previous occasions, we evaluate this Conference as a historic opportunity for finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and as a courageous step towards the establishment of a long-awaited peace, stability and security in the region. We sincerely hope that this opportunity, which emerged despite many difficulties, should be evaluated properly by all the parties so that the Conference can achieve, as soon as possible, its ultimate objective. In this context, I want to commend particularly the constructive and conciliatory attitude of the Palestinian leadership and the Palestinians participating in the Conference to this end.

In spite of the ongoing peace process, however, we see much to our regret that Israel still continues to maintain her intransigent attitude towards the substance of the issue by rejecting to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories, by applying strict security measures there and by establishing new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, last of which being built in the Golan Heights during the Madrid Conference, in contravention of the provisions of the relevant international conventions. In this context, we find the recent Knesset decision of 11 November, which claims that Golan is Israeli territory and that it should be kept out of the framework of the negotiations at the Middle East Peace Conference, contradictory to the spirit of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East calls for movement and flexibility from all sides. The Arab side has so far demonstrated a constructive and conciliatory spirit at the Middle East Peace Conference. We believe that it is now high time for Israel to do the same, by immediately taking the necessary constructive steps expected of it to make a meaningful contribution to the peace process and not to let this historic opportunity for establishing a just and durable peace in the region slip away.

On this occasion, I would like to emphasize that the Palestinian people, who have suffered for years, need at this critical juncture, more than ever, the solidarity and support of the international community. In this connection, I wish to commend the persistent efforts made by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People under your able leadership to promote a wider awareness of the question of Palestine and thus contribute to fostering stronger sympathy and support in the international community in this regard.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the best wishes of the Turkish nation and the Turkish Government to the Palestinian people in its efforts towards achieving a just and lasting peace in the region.

UGANDA

H.E. Mr. Yoweri K. Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda

On this occasion as you mark the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish, on behalf of myself, the Government and people of Uganda, to commend you and all members of your Committee for your worthy efforts in keeping the attention of the international community focused on the tragic and unfortunate plight of the people of Palestine since the creation of the State of Israel in 1947.

The plight of the people of Palestine is a stark reminder of our collective responsibility to stem and reverse the injustice imposed on a people denied its inalienable rights and attribute as a nation.

The dangerous situation in Palestine emanates from the continuing unjust exprcpriation, by Israel, of Palestine and other Arab territories, contrary to the Geneva Convention of 1949 prohibiting such annexation, deportation of victims, and resettlement of the population of the occupying power in the occupied territories.

The courage and statesmanship demonstrated by the Palestinian people, under the authentic leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization in their heroic struggle and resistance through the intifadah against occupation and repression by the occupying power is a source of great inspiration and pride to us and to all people struggling for self-determination. We commend the Palestinian people for their resilience in the search for the solution to the problem of its plight.

The recent initiative towards a solution to the problem deserves our support as it is a step in the positive direction. Such efforts should lead to a total withdrawal of Israel from occupied Palestine and other Arab territories, guarantee of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to return to its homeland and its exercise of the right to self-determination in a homeland of its own.

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

H.E. Mr. Mikhail S. Gorbachev, President of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

[Original: Russian]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I send my good wishes to you and to the whole Palestinian people and express the hope that its legitimate right to self-determination will be realized.

The constructive approach of the Palestinian leadership to a Middle East settlement in connection with the Madrid Peace Conference has been much appreciated in my country. I look forward to continuing cooperation and mutual understanding in the common effort to advance the peace process in the Middle East for the good of the Palestinian people and all other peoples living in the region.

VIET NAM

H.E. Mr. Vo Van Kiet, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

On this occasion, on 29 November, I would like to extend to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and to all the Palestinian people, our solidarity and warmest greetings.

Over the past 40 years, the staunch and persistent struggle of the Palestinian people for its sacred national rights, among them, the right to self-determination and the right to return and to establish an independent and sovereign State, has recorded important developments.

The people and Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam unswervingly support the just cause of the Palestinian people and welcome the good will of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to participate in the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference to seek a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question. We are convinced that a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East question must be based on the total withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, the cessation of construction of Jewish settlements in those territories and the recognition of all fundamental national rights of the Palestinian people.

We are confident that the arduous and staunch struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the PLO, which has enjoyed the support of the United Nations and all progressive mankind, will certainly achieve final victory.

B. Messages from Ministers for Foreign Affairs

COLOMBIA

H.E. Mr. Luis Fernando Jaramillo Correa, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

The people of Colombia salute the Palestinian people on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Several decades have passed since the United Nations proposed the partition of Palestine into two independent States, an Arab Palestinian State and a Jewish State, with Jerusalem as an international city. Colombia has supported the decisions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council, based on the principle of self-determination of peoples, which contribute to the restoration of peace in the Middle East and reduce the tensions affecting world peace.

As States are aware, the "Question of Palestine" has been included as an item in the agenda of the General Assembly since 1974 and the Assembly has reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Colombia shares the view that there will be no solution in the Middle East until the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people are taken into account.

Colombia welcomed the recent convening of the Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid under the auspices of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the international community's support of that Conference. Colombia trusts that peaceful means of solving the question of Palestine, whether bilateral or multilateral, will continue to be used until a just and lasting peace is achieved.

ECUADOR

H.E. Mr. Diego Cordovez, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Spanish]

On the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I wish to inform you that a fundamental element of the Ecuadorian Government's foreign policy continues to be full support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly self-determination and independence.

Likewise, the Ecuadorian Government is in favour of a comprehensive and just political solution of the problem. It therefore welcomed the peace conference recently held in Madrid and supports the efforts made by the countries concerned to achieve a lasting settlement of the conflict and thus restore peace and stability in the entire region. The bilateral meetings to be held with a view to achieving the goals set at the Madrid Conference will without question contribute to an enhanced and lasting solution of the problem.

GREECE

H.E. Mr. Andonis Samaras, Minister for Foreign Affairs

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Greece pays a tribute to the efforts and the determination of the Palestinian people to promote a peaceful solution to the problem and thus respond to the universal quest for peace.

Greece welcomed the courageous decisions taken recently by the Palestine National Council in Algiers for participating in the Madrid Peace Conference. The convening of the Madrid Peace Conference demonstrated all over the world that the leadership of the Palestinian people is ready to pursue by peaceful means the fulfilment of their objectives. The moderation and realism that were shown by the Palestinian side in front of the negotiating table proved to be an important asset for the talks that will follow.

The road to a just, permanent and comprehensive solution will be long and tortuous, but will inevitably lead to fair and stable peace in the region, guaranteeing the existence of all States in the region within safe and internationally recognized borders while in the meantime recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

HUNGARY

H.E. Mr. Géza Jeszenszky, Minister for Foreign Affairs

Allow me to convey the heartfelt congratulations of the people of the Republic of Hungary to the Palestinian people on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We have noted with satisfaction and hope that the parties concerned have taken the first steps on the way to the solution of the conflict which has inflicted suffering and human tragedies on the peoples of the Middle East, among them the Palestinian people.

We highly appreciate the constructive and responsible conduct manifested by the representatives of the Palestinian people for the advancement of the peace process, and we are confident that they will do everything possible in the future as well in order that the peace efforts be crowned with success.

In our belief, a lasting, just and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict may not be achieved without the solution of the cause of the Palestinian people in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations. We support the implementation of the political rights of the Palestinian people as well as the right of all peoples in the region to live in peace and security within internationally recognized and guaranteed borders.

Now, when confrontation and the use of force are being replaced by cooperation and dialogue in the greater part of the world, we, along with the international community, are confident that hostilities can come to an end in the Middle East too, and the desire of the Palestinian people for a free and peaceful life in hurnan dignity will come true, a desire shared by all peoples in the region.

JAPAN

H.E. Mr. Michio Watanabe, Minister for Foreign Affairs

I am honoured to send my cordial greetings on this, the fourteenth International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

At this time, world attention is focused on prospects for peace in the Middle East. The international peace conference in Madrid which, for the first time, brought together the parties concerned, and the anticipated direct bilateral negotiations surely give us cause to be optimistic about the peace process.

Japan pays a tribute to the earnest efforts, led by the United States and the Soviet Union, to achieve peace in the region, and appreciates the commitment to this goal that is being demonstrated by the parties concerned. I sincerely hope that the Peace Conference will be a first step towards the realization of genuine peace in the Middle East. Once the direct bilateral negotiations get under way, a multinational conference on regional issues--including arms control, the economy, the environment and refugees--will be convened. Japan has valuable experience and knowledge it can bring to bear in the resolution of these issues. Moreover, Japan is planning to participate in that conference in the hope of extending appropriate cooperation towards Middle East peace and of making a contribution commensurate with its position in the international community. Indeed, Japan looks forward to working with other countries in playing a constructive role in the peace process, and would be deeply gratified if it could in even a small way make a contribution to the achievement of peace in the Middle East.

My country highly evaluates the role which the Security Council has been playing in the Middle East peace process.

I am pleased to note that, in conformity with Japan's long-held position, these most recent efforts in the peace process are based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

I sincerely hope that the talks between representatives of the Palestinian people and Israel will be successful; that the Palestinian issue will be resolved with the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace; that the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people will be internationally recognized; and that all the Palestinian people will be able to live in peace and freedom as soon as possible.

Towards this end, Japan hopes that the parties concerned will build on the fruits of the international peace conference and will hereafter assume a more flexible and realistic approach to the upcoming negotiations.

Japan has long been committed to improving the lives of the Palestinian people through contributions to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United Nations Development Programme. On this occasion, I wish to confirm that it will continue to support the Palestinian people to the best of its ability.

LIBYAN ARAB JAMAHIRIYA

H.E. Mr. Ibrahim Muhammad Al-Bishari, Secretary of the People's Committee for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation

[Original: Arabic]

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which is celebrated on 29 November 1991 by the peoples of the United Nations and its international and regional organizations in recognition of and appreciation for the just struggle being waged by the Palestinian Arab people for the liberation of its territory, self-determination, the building of its independent State and the resumption of its place among the free peoples of the world, I am pleased, on behalf of the Libyan Arab people, to salute the struggle of the Palestinian people against the racist settler colonialism which is supported by world imperialist forces. I also salute the sincere solidarity expressed by the peoples of the world with the cause of the Palestinian Arab people.

Despite the fact that over 43 years have passed since the forcible seizure of Palestine, and despite the crimes, persecution and oppression to which the Palestinian people has been subjected and which surpass all the crimes humanity has known throughout its long history, and notwithstanding the adoption of numerous United Nations resolutions, all stressing the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes, this Organization, and in particular the Security Council, have been unable to take practical and decisive steps to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its legitimate and inalienable rights and to establish an independent State on all of the territory of Palestine. This must be ascribed to the misuse of the veto by the great powers, as well as to the provision of military and economic support to the Zionist regime, which has encouraged it to persist in its obstinacy, to flout all international laws, instruments and resolutions and to continue its aggression against the Palestinian people.

The international community is called upon today, more than at any time in the past, in particular in the light of international détente, to support the Palestinian Arab people and affirm that people's legitimate right to liberation and the establishment of its independent State, like other peoples of the world.

We demand that an immediate start be made on serious efforts to strengthen the role of the international Organization and review some of the provisions contained in the Charter that are no longer consonant with current international conditions and variables.

The intifadah of the Palestinian people in the face of the Zionist occupation demonstrates to us that when right is on the side of the weak, it gives them a strength which the technology of the oppressor is incapable of resisting. The intifadah has proved that the will of peoples to achieve their legitimate desires cannot be overcome.

While affirming to you the adherence of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to all the resolutions that guarantee the full rights of the Palestinian Arab people, we urge you and the international community as represented in the United Nations to work by all possible means to render justice to this people, free it from oppression and enable it to recover its usurped rights and land.

MADAGASCAR

H.E. Mr. Cesaire Rabenoro, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: French]

On this day, 29 November, which the United Nations has chosen as the occasion for displaying solidarity with the Palestinian people, the Malagasy Government would like to join its voice to those of other peace- and justice-loving States in order to demonstrate its support for the legitimate aspirations of that people.

In view of the positive developments in international relations, the international community must intensify to an unprecedented degree its efforts to find a final settlement to the Palestinian problem.

In this connection, the Malagasy Government welcomes the holding of the Middle East Peace Conference at Madrid and encourages further negotiations among all the parties concerned in order to reach a lasting solution to the question, in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which set out the principles for a settlement, namely the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including its right to freedom and national independence, and the guarantee of international protection to ensure the exercise of that right, the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories, and the resolution of the Palestinian refugee problem.

We also take this opportunity to pay a tribute to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its untiring efforts in the search for a just solution to the Palestinian question.

MAURITANIA

H.E. Mr. Hasni Ould Didi, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

[Original: Arabic]

In adherence to international instruments, in observance of the human right to live in peace and security and being convinced of the necessity for the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable and legitimate right to self-determination and independence and the enjoyment of full sovereignty in its occupied territory, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania proclaims its solidarity with the Palestinian people in its heroic struggle, and gives its blessing to the valiant intifadah, which is entering its fourth year. Mauritania considers that the ideal framework for a solution of the Palestinian problem is the convening of an international conference aimed at bringing peace and security to the region with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

OMAN

H.E. Mr. Yousef Bin Al-Alawi Bin Abdulla, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

The international community meets every year on this day to celebrate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which reminds us that the question of Palestine is at the centre of the conflict in the Middle East. The inhabitants of the region, together with all peace-loving people, are striving to find a just political solution to the Palestinian question which will guarantee the legitimate and human rights of the fraternal Palestinian people and guarantee peace, security and stability to all parties in the region.

The policy of settlement and repression practiced daily and mercilessly by Israel against the helpless Palestinian people, and that of bringing in Jews from all parts of the world to be settled in the occupied Arab territories, as well as the unjust policies which put pressure on the Palestinian people, are all aimed at forcing that people to emigrate and be replaced with Jewish immigrants.

Israel must turn to peace, because a true guarantee of security can come only through a just solution which puts the legitimate rights of all parties concerned on an equal footing and which is founded on international legality and United Nations resolutions.

Being convinced of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in accordance with the principles and goals of the United Nations, the Sultanate of Oman expresses its optimism over the efforts being exerted by both the United States of America and the Soviet Union in order to solve the long-standing Middle East question, which have resulted in the Madrid Peace Conference. Oman hopes that all the parties will overcome the customary obstacles which have prevented the convening of such meetings and that the bilateral negotiations will have positive results which will satisfy all the parties.

Therefore, we appeal to the international community more than ever to exert further efforts to reach a peaceful, comprehensive and just solution to this problem, which is of such importance for international peace and security.

Finally, on behalf of the Sultanate of Oman, I express to the members of the esteemed Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, hearty thanks for your sincere efforts in furtherance and support of the Palestinian cause. Our country will spare no effort in promoting the work of the esteemed Committee.

SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

H.E. Mr. Farouk Al-Shara', Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Arabic]

On behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic, and in my own personal capacity, I am pleased to salute your observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and of that people's legitimate struggle to recover its national and inalienable rights, in implementation of General Assembly resolution 45/67 of 6 December 1990. I am also pleased to salute the valiant intifadah, which is now entering its fifth year, reaffirming Palestinian determination to continue to oppose aggression and repressive practices and to put an end to the Israeli occupation, whatever the sacrifices and however great the difficulties.

The intifadah has exposed to the world the true face of the rulers of Israel, their racist practices, their continuing violations of international law and legitimacy and their refusal to comply with United Nations resolutions calling for a complete withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and recognition for the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, in particular its right to self-determination. The adherence of the Israeli rulers to their expansionist schemes and the continued building of settlements in the occupied Arab territories demonstrates the falsity of their peace pretensions, which is blatantly obvious, especially as we all remember the Madrid Peace Conference, which was convened on 30 October, and the intransigent stance of Israel in refusing to implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), on the basis of which the Peace Conference was held. Since the inauguration of the Peace Conference at Madrid, Israel has given the whole world tangible proof that it is the enemy of peace and that it turns a deaf ear to public opinion and has no regard for international law or legality. Since the beginning of the Conference it has proceeded to take steps and measures to sabotage Arab and international efforts aimed at achieving a just and comprehensive peace in the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as the principle of land for peace. Israel's aggressive behaviour has manifested itself in the daily bombing of southern Lebanon, and in the establishment of new settlements in the occupied Syrian Golan and the West Bank. Israel's aggressive policy has also been demonstrated by the recent decision of the Knesset on 11 November 1991 to consider the occupied Syrian Golan as Israeli territory.

While proclaiming its firm commitment to the relevant United Nations resolutions on the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Syrian Arab Republic will spare no effort in continuing to work to bring about a just and comprehensive peace based on the principles of international legitimacy and the relevant United Nations resolutions, so as to ensure Israel's withdrawal from all the occupied Arab territories and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable national rights, in particular its right to self-determination and to the establishment of its independent State on its national soil.

In saluting your esteemed Committee, I hope that your continuing efforts may achieve the desired success in supporting the struggle of the Palestinian people to bring a just and comprehensive peace to the region. If aggression, occupation and the acquisition of the territory of others by war disappears from the region, security, stability and prosperity may be achieved for its peoples.

TURKEY

H.E. Mr. Hikmet Çetin, Minister for Foreign Affairs, in his capacity as Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I take great pleasure as Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers in reaffirming our staunch support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in its continuing struggle to attain its legitimate rights, including that of self-determination and establishing an independent State of its own.

We in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) are fully cognizant of the fact that the question of Palestine and the efforts to find a just solution to it remain one of the major concerns of the United Nations and of the international community as a whole. As is well known, OIC has, since its foundation, been closely associated with the Palestinian problem. It has always affirmed its active solidarity with the Palestinian people, under the able leadership of its sole representative, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and its strong support for the Palestinian people's just struggle, the intifadah, and has saluted with great pride its heroic steadfastness and immense sacrifices against the repressive practices of the Israeli forces of occupation.

We in OIC believe that a just and lasting solution of the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict can only be found by the withdrawal of Israel from the Arab territories it has occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and the recognition as well as the implementation of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, including their right to self-determination.

OIC has also closely followed the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Arab territories and has, on numerous occasions, expressed its deep concern over and strong condemnation of the arbitrary measures taken and the fait accomplis created by Israel there, such as imposing curfews, demolishing homes, detaining people without trial, and expelling Palestinians to neighbouring countries, as well as her use of brutal force, in violation of the human rights of the Palestinians living there.

Furthermore, OIC finds, like the rest of the international community, the Israeli insistence on establishing new Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories totally unacceptable in terms of the provisions of the relevant international conventions. The establishment of a new settlement in the Golan Heights during the Madrid Conference and the recent Knesset resolution which claims that Golan is Israeli soil, and that therefore is not negotiable at the peace talks, falling also, contrary to the spirit of the ongoing peace process, show that Israel still insists not to heed the voice of reasons.

We, in our capacity as Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, believe that unless a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict is found, peace and security cannot be achieved in the Middle East and therefore evaluate the Middle East Peace Conference as a good opportunity for finding a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular, resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We earnestly hope that this Conference will constitute a milestone to this end.

It in this context that we, at this critical juncture when the Middle East Peace Conference has convened, call upon all members of the international community and its organizations to show their determination not to allow Israel to impede the peace process and to do their utmost to secure an end to the Israeli occupation as well as the fulfilment of the long-awaited legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for the sake of a durable and comprehensive peace and security in the region.

On this occasion, as Chairman of the Twentieth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, I am also pleased to commend the persistent efforts made by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People under your able leadership to promote a wider awareness of the question of Palestine and thus contribute to fostering stronger sympathy and support in the international community in this regard.

On behalf of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, I take this opportunity to reiterate once again the solidarity of the Islamic people with their Palestinian brothers in their arduous struggle to attain their legitimate rights, including that of self-determination and that of establishing an independent State of their own.

UKRAINE

H.E. Mr. Anatoliy M. Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs

[Original: Russian]

Please accept my cordial and sincere greetings on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This year the commemoration of the Day of Solidarity is dominated by the convening of the Middle East Peace Conference, an event which, we hope, will be crucial to the future of the Middle Eastern region as a whole and to the restoration of the usurped rights of the Palestinian people.

For the first time a genuine hope has emerged of a solution through political dialogue to the complex and tangled knot of Middle Eastern problems - a hope that long-awaited peace will come at last to the suffering lands of the Middle East.

The convening of the Conference was made possible, thanks to the radical positive changes which have taken place in the world and to the growing trend towards solving the acute problems of the age by peaceful political means.

The role played by the United Nations and, in particular, by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People in mobilizing the international community's efforts towards resolving the chronic and potentially explosive conflict in the Middle East is universally acknowledged. We highly appreciate the exceptionally important role of the States which took the initiative of convening the Conference, and we salute the readiness to grasp this historic opportunity shown by the parties to the conflict. On this day we cannot but note the particularly constructive and realistic position of the Palestinian delegation and its sincere desire to do its share in the search for a just and mutually acceptable solution to the problem of a Middle East settlement.

It is evident that a great deal of effort will be required from the participants in the talks and from the international community as a whole in order to ensure a successful conclusion of the process initiated in Madrid. We should like to hope that all parties will display wisdom and goodwill and will refrain from any action that might jeopardize or in any way complicate the newly begun process of searching for paths towards a settlement.

In the present situation, qualitatively new possibilities are opening up to eliminate the focus of tension in the Middle East. At the same time, the fundamental principles of settlement formulated in the well-known United Nations resolutions, inseparably linked to the solution of the Middle East problem, remain unchanged. The way to durable, just peace lies through seeking to establish a balance of mutual interests and giving consideration to every aspect of the legitimate rights of all countries and peoples of the region, including the Arab people of Palestine.

Allow me to take this opportunity to assure you once again that Ukraine will continue to give full support to the noble work of the Committee in its active and consistent efforts for the restoration of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

C. Messages from Governments

ARGENTINA

[Original: Spanish]

The Government of Argentina wishes to participate in the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. In that connection, it considers it appropriate to repeat what was said by the head of its delegation to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, namely that we support the convening of a peace conference in the region, aimed at achieving a satisfactory and definitive solution to the various issues at stake, including the restitution of occupied territories and recognition of the right to secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

In this context, it would seem useful to add that the current international situation is conducive to seeking peace through negotiation and compromise instead of violence and force. The Government of Argentina therefore congratulates the parties participating in the Madrid Conference on the Middle East on their efforts. That Conference constitutes an important step towards the establishment of a climate of dialogue which we hope will continue until a just and lasting solution in the region is achieved. A good example is set for the international community when parties which were formerly antagonists in one of the most distressing and dangerous conflicts in history agree to participate in negotiations that can only lead to a positive settlement.

The Government of Argentina hopes that this auspicious process will lead to an understanding among all the parties involved on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

GUYANA

On this, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, Guyana once again reiterates its support for its just struggle to regain its legitimate national rights, primarily the right to self-determination.

In the past year a number of important developments have taken place, the most important perhaps being the historic peace conference on the Middle East, held in Madrid during 30 October and 1 November 1991. The promise that the negotiating process will be carried forward in the near future offers hope that a solution to a seemingly intractable problem may now be achievable.

It is the hope of the Government of Guyana that the question of Palestinian rights, which is at the heart of the Middle East imbroglio, will be fully addressed during this process so that the prospects of success may be enhanced.

MEXICO

[Original: Spanish]

The Government of Mexico wishes to reaffirm, on the occasion of the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, its full support for the cherished goal that the Palestinian people should exercise fully its inalienable national rights.

The Palestinian people's endeavour to achieve full enjoyment of its human rights and fundamental freedoms has led the entire international community to focus its attention on the need to achieve peace in the Middle East - a comprehensive, just and lasting peace that would help to fulfil the legitimate aspirations of all the parties involved in the conflict.

In that connection, Mexico wishes to express its satisfaction at the completion, in October and November 1991, of the first phase of the Middle East Peace Conference. Similarly, the people and the Government of Mexico earnestly hope that in the following phases of the peace talks, it will be possible to achieve a lasting and satisfactory solution based on strict compliance with all the resolutions of the United Nations, particularly Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) of 22 November 1967 and 338 (1973) of 22 October 1973.

D. Messages from intergovernmental organizations with observer status at the United Nations

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

General Secretariat

[Original: Arabic]

It is a national occasion for us to celebrate on 29 November the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People established by the United Nations in support of the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people and of its legitimate national rights.

The decision of the United Nations to proclaim this day the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People signifies the agreement of the international community that the Palestinian people should have a legitimate right to establish an independent State, which was urged by the 1947 resolution on partition. At the same time, it constitutes a direct invitation to the members of the international community embodied in the United Nations and its Member States to assume their duties and responsibilities towards the Palestinian people by implementing what has been adopted in the name of international legitimacy in this respect.

As we celebrate this occasion this year, the Palestinian question has acquired particular importance, since representatives of the Palestinian people have been invited to attend the Peace Conference on an equal footing with the other parties concerned. Israel, on the other hand, continues to pursue its aggressive policy with regard to the rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories by practicing the most reprehensible forms of inhuman repression, by its continuing endeavours to alter the identity of the Palestinian land by building more settlements and by its latest attempts to steal historical documents from the Shariah Court in Jerusalem. Through such acts Israel is striving to create a climate of provocation against Arabs that will enable it to achieve its expansionist ambitions and basically demolish the peace process with which Arabs and Palestinians have demonstrated their willingness to deal with from a civilized standpoint and with a sincere desire to reach a peaceful and comprehensive solution guaranteeing legitimate Palestinian rights in accordance with what has been adopted in the name of international legitimacy, in particular Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In celebrating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States salutes the struggle and steadfastness of the heroic Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory and follows with interest its valiant intifadah, which supports the Palestinian negotiator with its tenacity and its determination to achieve the full and irreducible rights of the Palestinian people. The General Secretariat of the League of Arab States gives its full support to Palestinian rights and urges the international community and all peace-loving international forces to take a firm stand against Israeli prevarications aimed at divesting the peace process of its lofty purpose, which is to achieve peace in the region. The General Secretariat warns of the consequences of Israel's pursuit of its policy of prevarication and provocation, whereby it is endeavouring to increase tension and conflict in the region and expose the Middle East to the dangers of confrontation, in which the lives of many innocent people may be lost.

ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

H.E. Dr. Salim A. Salim,
Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People that the international community is observing today, I wish to reiterate the unequivocal and principled support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), for the just cause of the Palestinian people. OAU has long determined that the Palestine question was of concern to it and consequently has included the question in the agenda of all the ordinary sessions of the Council of Ministers. This solidarity with the Palestinian people is being continually manifested through resolutions, statements and press releases. OAU's support for the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is steadfast and unwavering. It is our fervent hope and expectation that the peace process on the Middle East currently under way will take full cognizance of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and statehood. In this regard, pressure

should be put on Israel, with a view to forcing it to abandon its policies in the occupied Arab territories that had proved detrimental to the attainment of a just and lasting peace in the region. Finally, I commend your Committee's energetic espousal of the rights of the oppressed Palestinian people and wish you every success in your noble endeavours.

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE

H.E. Dr. Hamid Algabid, Secretary-General
of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

[Original: French]

On 29 November each year, the international community celebrates the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in conformity with the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 2 December 1977. The Day was intended to be the day of support for the rights of the Palestinian people and its just struggle to recover its inalienable national rights, including its right to return, to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent State on its national soil, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) adopted on 29 November 1947.

The drama through which the Palestinian people has been living for 44 years, with all the attendant wars, sufferings, tragedies and devastating consequences for the Palestinian people and all the States and peoples of the Middle East, the Palestinian question and the Arab-Israeli conflict are entering into a new and more delicate and difficult phase with the launching of the process of seeking a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict, a new phase which is the outcome of the determined efforts made by the United States of America, with the support of the international community. The Peace Conference inaugurated at Madrid with the participation of all parties to the conflict had as its basis in international law Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of "land for peace" and the inadmissibility of acquiring the territory of others by force.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which regards the Palestinian cause as its main endeavour, welcomed the convening of the Peace Conference and stresses that the stability, security and development of the region are subordinate to the achievement of an equitable and just settlement of the Palestinian problem based on Israel's total withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Al-Quds al Sharif, the return of the holy city to Arab-Islamic sovereignty and the restoration to the Palestinian people of its inalienable national rights, including its right to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent State on its national soil, with Al-Quds al Sharif as its capital, under the auspices of the Palestine Liberation Organization, its sole legitimate representative.

In this context, the Secretary-General urges Member States and the international community to intensify their efforts to induce Israel to put an immediate end to the establishment of settlements in the occupied territories and to accept that the Palestinian people should be assured of international protection in conformity with the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, prior to the end of the occupation and the restoration of the Palestinian people to sovereignty, independence and freedom on its own soil.

Similarly, the Secretary-General reaffirms the adherence of OIC to the principle of justice and to a peace based on international law. He takes this opportunity to reaffirm the unshakable commitment of the Islamic Ummah to continue its support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people and its blessed intifadah until the achievement of all its goals of liberty and independence have been achieved and until peace is established in Palestine, the land of peace.

E. Messages from national liberation movements

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA

Dr. S.E.M. Pheko, Chief Representative

It gives me much delight to give a message of solidarity to our Palestinian brothers and sisters, on behalf of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, the custodian of the true aspirations and interests of our dispossessed people.

The struggle of the people of Palestine is identical to that of the people of Azania in many respects. They have a Balfour Declaration of 1917. We have the South Africa Act of 1909 which consolidated racist colonialism and renamed our country Azania - "South Africa".

Britain colonized our country but never decolonized it. Britain was entrusted with a mandate of the League of Nations to administer Palestine and help her to independence. But in 1948 the Palestinians were betrayed and made perpetual refugees. They have suffered this national tragedy for over 42 years. South Africa and Israel are twins. There is now the well-known collaboration between Israel and South Africa on military and nuclear issues which endanger the Middle East and Africa, respectively. While the nuclear capability and development of some third world countries have been destroyed or discouraged, that of Israel and South Africa have been encouraged and assisted.

In October 1991, F. W. de Klerk of South Africa visited Israel and signed an economic and scientific treaty openly, but certainly a military and nuclear one secretly. De Clerk asked Israel to help South Africa establish "an economic community in southern Africa" - this reveals that apartheid colonialist South Africa has not abandoned its imperialist-backed plan of domination in what the South African regime calls a "constellation of States".

The South African regime is entrenching itself in Africa, working hard to co-opt the Africans into its own apartheid colonialist machinery. The regime is vigorously building its military and nuclear power. During November 1991, two court cases were heard in Philadelphia. One involved $30 million worth of weapons. Another related to $1 billion worth of military technology bought by South Africa.

The African people are fighting for national liberation and self-determination. They and the people of Palestine are the only ones who have not yet realized this right.

The period 1991 to 2000 was declared the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism by the General Assembly in its resolution 43/47 of 22 November 1988. And of course General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV), 1541 (XV), 1654 (XVI), 1810 (XVII), 3314 (XXIX), 2526 (XXIV) and 2131 (XX) and the United Nations Charter, Articles 1(2), 55 and 56, as well as the 1977 Geneva Protocol I, article 1(4) support the right to self-determination for all peoples. Colonialism is a violation of jus cogens.

Our own struggle has been falsely presented as merely fighting against apartheid or racism. Our struggle is about our land that was taken away from us through aggression and colonialism. It is not just to welcome the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which was lost only 50 years ago, but tenaciously oppose the right of self-determination for the people of Azania.

It is therefore abominable that vigorous attempts are being made by some countries to remove South Africa from the list of territories to be decolonized. Many countries involved in the preservation of colonialism in South Africa are the traditional practitioners of slavery, colonialism, racism and apartheid.

It is important therefore to restate loud and clear that South Africa is the last bastion of colonialism in Africa; notwithstanding that many have been fooled about the colonial situation in this African country. Even those who ought to know better are mesmerized by the Eurocentric or Westocentric interpretation of international law on the South African colony.

They talk about self-determination and decolonization being applicable everywhere in the world except in South Africa (Azania). The indigenous African people of Azania were colonized and lost their land and national sovereignty. It does not make sense to welcome the independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which was lost only 50 years ago but tenaciously oppose the right of the dispossessed African people of South Africa (Azania) to self-determination. The colonization of this African country is much longer than that of the European countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

There was no country called "South Africa" before 20 September 1909 but four British colonies of Natal, Cape, Transvaal and Orange Colony. In the so-called South Africa, the colonialists tried not only to mutilate and fake the history of Azania (South Africa); they also manipulated international law. South Africa is the only British colony in Africa that has not been decolonized. Colonialism remains entrenched in South Africa, with its offshoot apartheid and racist minority alien rule being the symptom of the colonial disease.

The African people in South Africa have the right to self-determination. They demand decolonization of their country now. Not the white washing of the crime of apartheid and the double standard condoning colonialism and racism in the African country, Azania, colonially called "South Africa" since 20 September 1909 by colonialists.

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people. The peoples of Palestine and of Azania must work together to achieve the common goal of national independence and dignity. Both peoples must rededicate themselves to their noble struggle despite the obstacles that are being put in their way. In the final analysis, we are our own liberators.

F. Messages from United Nations specialized agencies

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

[Original: French]

The dove of peace which recently descended on Madrid has engendered tremendous hope throughout the world, and it is in that spirit that the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People is being celebrated today.

The era of cooperation which may come into being in the Middle East if the Madrid initiative is continued and extended and achieves concrete form can only bring rejoicing to all those who advocate peace in the world.

Reiterating what the President of the General Conference, the Chairman of the Executive Board and the Director-General has said on 30 October, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) expresses the hope that a just and lasting peace commensurate with the expectations of all the peoples of the region will finally be established in their lands, with their ancient culture, which have been illuminated by faith and have since been ravaged for so long.

G. Messages from non-governmental organizations

ANTI-ZIONIST COMMITTEE OF THE SOVIET PUBLIC

We have received your kind message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We greet the solemn meeting of the Committee that will be observed at United Nations Headquarters on 29 November 1991.

We strongly support the struggle of the Palestinian people for its legal rights. We highly appreciate the will for peace of the Palestinian people and all steps to settle the complicated problems of the Middle East by peaceful means and to stop the Zionist aggression.

We stand for cooperation and good neighbourhood between the Arab and Jewish peoples. We also support the active role of the United Nations in achieving this noble goal.

ARAB AMERICAN INSTITUTE

The Arab American Institute (AAI) is proud to join its colleagues on the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine, to celebrate the triumphant achievements of the Palestinian people on this, the eve of the second historic Middle East Peace Conference, begun a month ago in Madrid. AAI recognizes that the peace process itself represents a major success on the road to victory for it has already created a new reality, namely, of formal international recognition of two peoples, two nations and, inevitably, two independent States.

We commend the dignity and share the hope of the Palestinian people - nourished by the soul of the intifadah, its commitment to self-determination, and driven by a vision of peace with Israel that is both possible and plausible - as it takes its place side by side with world leaders to negotiate its own national liberation.

The Arab American Institute, committed to the political empowerment of individual Arab Americans, can also take pride in the United States for exerting its political and moral leadership to recognize the basic rights of Palestinians. We are encouraged by these efforts to work directly with the Palestinian leadership towards ending 24 years of brutal military rule and transforming 40 years of dislocation, dispossession, invasions and occupation into a new vision for peace, national unity and international cooperation.

We pledge, for our part, to work for peace:

- to continue to press our Government to remain firm in its commitment to peace; and
- to support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to full national self-determination in its independent State in Palestine.

ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

On this occasion, the Arab Organization for Human Rights (AOHR) commends the Palestinians of the intifadah in their heroic struggle to end the occupation and strongly affirms that the continuing denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination is entirely unacceptable and constitutes a major danger to peace. AOHR, a non-governmental organization for the protection and promotion of human rights in the Arab world, recognizes the extreme gravity of the present situation in the occupied territories where escalating human rights violations accentuate the dire need for a just and comprehensive solution to the question of Palestine.

ASIAN COMMITTEE OF SOLIDARITY WITH ARABS

I would like to congratulate you for the observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The observance of the day will have a great impact on the peace talks between the Arabs and the Israelis.

I, on behalf of the Asian Committee of Solidarity with Arabs and the people of Bangladesh, express my solidarity and deep support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We attach much importance to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which can ensure the legitimate and just demand of the people of Palestine.

The people of Bangladesh reiterated its full support for the just struggle of the independence of the Palestinian people and of the leadership of President Yasser Arafat.

We express our support for the initiative taken by the United States Administration and hope that this time there will be a justified and honourable solution of the Middle East crisis.

Last of all, I thank the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for inviting me to participate in today's meeting.

(signed: Abdur Razzaq, Associate President)

ASSOCIATION OF ANTIFASCISTS AND VICTIMS OF NAZISM IN ISRAEL

The National Secretariat of the Association of Antifascists and Victims of Nazism in Israel, on behalf of all the association's members, sends this message of solidarity greetings to the participants of the solemn meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Our association, a participating non-governmental organization of the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine (ICCP), and member of the International Federation of Resistance (FIR), in the ranks of which are many of veteran service men and women of the Second World War Allied Forces of the Anti-Hitler Coalition, former partisans, ghetto fighters, and survivors of the Holocaust, has a Jewish-Arab membership. We see as one of our task, to address the Israeli public, explaining that we, who have struggled in the past for the liberation of Europe from Nazi occupation, from fascist oppression, as well as for peace, democracy and friendship among nations, cannot remain silent when our country, Israel, occupied Arab territories by force of arms and oppresses the Palestinian population, trampling underfoot human rights and the legitimate right of oppressed people to resist and fight for their national liberation. By this stance, we are true to the oath taken in 1945 by the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps: "...To build a new world in peace and liberty for the peoples is our goal; this we owe our murdered comrades".

We utterly oppose the defilement of the intifadah as a form of terrorism and look upon the intifadah as the legitimate struggle of an oppressed people, the land of which is occupied by a foreign power. We explain that the legitimacy of this struggle was recognized by the rules and sentences of the International Court in Nuremberg which tried and sentenced in 1945-1946 the main perpetrators of the most heinous Nazi crimes against humanity and mankind. The legitimacy of the resistance to occupation is imbedded in the principles of the United Nations.

Our association acts, together with other democratic forces in Israel, against racism and discrimination against the Arab minority in Israel, against expropriation of Arab land and expulsion of Arab dwellers from the soil of their forefathers.

On this Day of Solidarity, we greet the Palestinian people in general, and in particular the ones who live under Israeli occupation and wish that they will achieve their national liberation, the implementation of their right to self-determination and independent statehood on the soil of their homeland, side by side in peaceful coexistence with Israel, true to the principle laid down by the General Assembly of the United Nations in respect to the Israeli-Palestinian problem, which means "Two States for the Two Peoples - Israel and Palestine".

We wish, together with all enlightened people of this world and in our region, that the peace process, which opened a few weeks ago in Madrid, will succeed, that in the framework of this, Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) will be fully implemented and the just cause of the Palestinian people will find its solution. We wish that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the mutual bloodshed it causes, will soon become a matter of the past, that comprehensive, just and lasting peace will reign in our region.

We pledge to contribute to this goal as far as lies in our modest possibilities.

ASSOCIATION PAYS DE LOIRE - GAZA - JERUSALEM

[Original: French]

Our Association supports this International Day and assures you of its wholehearted solidarity.

EGYPTIAN UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION

The Egyptian United Nations Association would like to express its full support and solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory - the intifadah - and outside, till they have their rights and their State. We, as all the peoples of the world, admire their struggle and sacrifice and wish all success in the discussions and negotiations till peace will be settled and the Palestinian State established.

INDO-ARAB ISLAMIC YOUTH ASSOCIATION

We, on behalf of the Indian people and members of our Association, convey our warm greetings to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for the excellent and commendable work done for the restoration of the right of self-determination to the Palestinian people, in accordance with various United Nations resolutions.

It was the historic day of 29 November 1947 that the General Assembly adopted resolution 181 (II) for the creation of a "Jewish State" and an "Arab State". It is unfortunate that despite the sincere and continuous efforts of the United Nations body, the "Arab State of Palestine" could not become a reality. The implementation of resolution 181 (II) with regard to the Arab State and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) is the responsibility of the United Nations and the international community.

We highly appreciate the dedicated efforts of the United States to initiate a dialogue for peace in West Asia by convening the Madrid Peace Conference, which was as historic event in the last 44 years, to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. We congratulate United States President George Bush and Secretary of State James Baker for championing the cause of peace in West Asia. It will supplement the efforts of the United Nations to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967).

We sincerely hope that Israel will appreciate the voice of the international community and will cooperate in implementing Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) besides giving up the policy of new settlements in occupied Arab areas and freeing prisoners from detention camps and putting an end to atrocities on innocent Palestinian people, which is in utter violation of human rights guaranteed by the United Nations Charter.

While expressing solidarity and support with the great Palestinian people, we look forward to the formation of the State of Palestine in the very near future.

INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT OF CONSCIENTIOUS WAR RESISTERS - ISRAELI SECTION

We are happy - though not satisfied - that peace negotiations have started finally in spite of manipulations attempted to eliminate them, efforts that still proceed. We regret that the peace talks are not taking place under United Nations auspices. The standard of nations living in nation-States is unconditionally tied with the standard of unity in the family of the United Nations. Breaking out of this means endangering the prospect of peace and justice.

Our concern are not States. Our concern are humans without distinction! So we hope and wish your concern is.

It is the right of all human beings to have a roof above their heads and a foothold wherever they go and stay; to enjoy the right of expression, to establish institutions expressing their views, altogether to live their lives as they wish - as long as they do not impose their views on their fellow humans.

Especially on this day - International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People - 29 November 1991 - we express our deep and actual rejection and objection to the sufferings the Israeli army and a part of the Israeli people are inflicting upon the Palestinians. We should repeat the spirit of the brilliant speech of Dr. Abd Al-Shafi and the struggle of Dr. Mubarak Awad.

We all hope that in spite of the rejecters of peace who exist in our region, we shall be able to reach, through non-violence, a life in common in peace.

We wish to stress and emphasize: it is the human status that counts, not the count of the State!

INTERNATIONAL PROGRESS ORGANIZATION

The 29th day of November 1991 is solemnly recognized by the International Progress Organization, a non-governmental organization headquartered in Vienna, Austria, to the United Nations. This day of support for the Palestinian people was first established in 1947 by a resolution of the General Assembly.

Years have passed since then but very little progress towards achieving the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people has been made. How many more years must this people wait for justice?

The commonly known wisdom is "justice delayed is justice denied". The Palestinian people living in the occupied territories have too long been denied justice and fulfilment of its natural inherent rights: to return to its homes and properties, its right to self-determination and to national independence, sovereignty and its own State, Palestine.

Is it any wonder then that the people of Palestine became tired of waiting and initiated a people's uprising, the intifadah?

We salute again the people of Palestine who publicly demand its inherent and natural rights. We also mourn and honour the thousands of Palestinian martyrs who have been killed or wounded by Israel, the occupying power, simply because they were demanding their human rights.

We also welcome the initiative of the United States of America following the end of the Gulf war to achieve a comprehensive, fair and just peace in the Middle East. It is uniformly recognized that resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian problem is the core problem to be resolved in the Middle East.

If peace is to be achieved in the Middle East, the rights of the Palestinian people must be recognized. Israel can no longer deny and continue to ignore the most basic, inherent rights of the Palestinians with impunity and not receive the opprobrium of the family of nations, including the United States of America.

If peace is to be achieved, we respectfully suggest that the United States once again support a peace that is based on fairness and justice, and that restores to the people of Palestine all of its rights, including the establishment of the State of Palestine.

We hope that this peace process, having once begun, will continue to be pressed until its successful conclusion, and that one year from today, we can applaud its success. The people of Palestine have waited long enough for the end of occupation and the official beginning of their nation-State, Palestine, and for a time to build a new country in a peaceful Middle East.

Long live Palestine and the Palestinian people!

LIGA ARGENTINA POR LOS DERECHOS DEL HOMBRE

[Original: Spanish]

We wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to reaffirm our solidarity with the Palestinian people in its struggle to achieve self-determination and to ensure compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations stipulating that an independent State is to be established.

At the same time we wish to express our admiration for the valiant struggle waged by men and women, and even children, who daily combat the forces of occupation, claiming their land and their rights.

We also call for an end to the savage repression to which the heroic Palestinian people is being subjected and which each day claims precious lives, mostly the lives of young people. We call for an end to the air attacks on Palestinian villages, towns and refugee camps. We condemn the killings, the torture and the imprisonment to which the Palestinians are subjected.

We express our support for the intifadah and for any form of popular mobilization leading to the recognition of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We also support any initiative leading to a peaceful settlement of the conflict in the region, which can be achieved only on the basis of respect for all the peoples concerned and for the right to live within secure and internationally recognized boundaries.

LIGA MEXICANA DE LOS DERECHOS HUMANOS, A.C.

[Original: Spanish]

Today is the forty-fourth anniversary of the dual injustice committed against the Palestinian people: on the one hand, it was robbed of its territorial space and its rights; on the other, General Assembly resolution 181 (II), later known as the "partition resolution", has from its adoption up to the present day not been equitably applied, because an Arab State has not been established in Palestine.

In the course of these 44 years, the valiant Palestinian people has endured the invasion of its territory, the occupation of its soil, genocide, expulsion and exile, all made possible by a manipulation and perversion of international law, under which a partial justice has been done in favour of the anti-Palestinian Governments, among them the one which invaded and occupied Palestinian territories.

Forty-four years after the infamous violation of international law was committed, with the blessing of the international community, the struggle of the Palestinian people continues, in a phase that began almost five years ago, known as the intifadah, with young people and children using stones to confront the irrational barbarity of the occupying forces which, with the most sophisticated weaponry, have not managed (nor will they manage) to vanquish them.

At the end of 44 years, the Government that has trampled on international law in violation of the principles of peace, solidarity, non-intervention, respect for the sovereignty of peoples and their right to self-determination is imposing its omnipotent and arrogant hegemony. For the same standards are not being applied to sanction two countries which have committed the same international crime: the invasion of another country. It becomes positively grotesque when one of them is being punished and the sanctions are responsible for the death of thousands of people; while the one that escapes punishment is receiving increased economic support and is being equipped with ultra-modern weapons.

In the 44-year struggle of the heroic Palestinian people, there is a glimmer of hope in the steps taken to hold the long-desired peace conference, followed by proposals and earnest hopes for its continuation. Expectations are focused on reaching a broad, just and lasting settlement of the Palestinian question and also on guaranteeing the protection of the valiant Palestinian people, inside and outside its territory against the Israeli occupying forces.

We await the approach of the forty-fifth year, when we may celebrate the full implementation of resolution 181 (II), the result of which should be the creation of a Palestinian Arab State with Jerusalem as its capital; when we may observe the rule of international law vindicated in favour of all the nations that make up the international community and not only some of them, and the United Nations and its Security Council restructured and made democratic.

MOVEMENT OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN IN ISRAEL

On the occasion of 29 November, the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we greet your efforts for settling a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through achieving the implementation of the General Assembly resolution to establish a Palestinian State beside the State of Israel.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK LAWYERS

The National Conference of Black Lawyers would like to express its continued solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve its right to self-determination, as guaranteed by international law. With the start of the long-awaited Middle East Peace Conference, we are hopeful yet cautious in wishing that the Palestinians are on the way to achieving their self-declared statehood.

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) sends its greetings to the United Nations on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We welcome the recognition of the Palestinian struggle for autonomy in the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

PSC believes in the right of the Palestinian people to decide its own future and believes that resolution of the tensions in the Middle East is dependent on a just and equitable settlement for the Palestinians.

PSC is organizing its own events in England for the International Day of Solidarity, in particular, a conference in London on 23 November, which will be addressed by Dr. Riad Malki and Khaled al-hassan.

PALESTINIAN AMERICAN YOUTH

The Palestinian American Youth organization in the United States of America would like to take this opportunity to express our solidarity and continued commitment to General Assembly resolution 32/40 B which declared 29 November as international day for the world to stand steadfast with the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people.

We salute all of the organizations, individuals and representatives that have joined today to unite in the commitment to struggle in hope of implementing a just and lasting solution to the Palestinian problem.

The year 1991 witnessed death and destruction in the Middle East. The barbaric Gulf war, the insane, continued Israeli bombing of Lebanon, and the unjustifiable, continued occupation and confiscation of the State of Palestine. Following this destruction the world has once again focused its attention on solving the Palestinian problem. We can only remain steadfast in the light of this renewed interest in bringing a lasting peace of the land of peace.

We salute those Palestinians who continue to struggle for their survival in the refugee camps from Lebanon to Gaza. We salute the brave souls that remain imprisoned in Israeli torture cells. We send our message of solidarity to Palestinians worldwide that are forbidden to return to their homes and lands in Palestine.

Finally, we are committed to continuing to work for a peaceful resolution to ending the brutal Israeli occupation. We hope that the years to come will move the United Nations resolutions on Palestine from the libraries to the land. We hope that we will soon see the Palestinian people live like every other nation in the world, free from foreign occupation, free to determine its own destiny in its independent Palestinian State.

PROGRESSIVE LIST FOR PEACE

On the occasion of the annually celebrated International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, we have today ambiguous feelings and thoughts.

The peace talks have started in Madrid and they are stuck somewhere in the air or on the waves of the sea, no one knowing where the spaceship of solution is heading. Manipulative efforts are still ongoing to torpedo the efforts of peace.

The Palestinian cause should be upheld in spite of all sorts of manipulations from any side and direction. This may be done only by our all stressing the basic facts and basic rights as the only basis for the solution. Human and civil rights, national rights included, should be provided to all involved. What is good for Israel is good for Palestine - what is good for Palestine is good for Israel. No other standard and principle is acceptable if the intention and wish for peace is genuine and truthful and it is to last and flourish.

In spite of the fact that the United Nations has been ousted from the talks, the United Nations and related non-governmental organizations still have a great task in the process. First of all, to show interest and activity on the subject; second, to press all national Governments to be active in this field. To isolate the rejecters and boycotters of the process and praise and uphold those who genuinely participate with their creativity and integrity. A common effort of the world community - peace and justice for all involved may be achieved.

SOVIET AFRO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, on behalf of Soviet public opinion, conveys friendly feelings to the Palestine Liberation Organization and to all Palestinian people, and sincerely wish them every success in the struggle for their legitimate rights and interests.

Profound changes now under way in the world arena, the establishment of the principles of new political thinking and the renouncement of methods of force in the solution of current problems create favourable conditions for reshaping international relations on a just, democratic basis for the practical settlement of regional conflicts. This trend gradually becomes apparent in the Middle East as well. The convocation of the Madrid Peace Conference paves the way for launching a peace process in the region, resolving the years-long Arab-Israeli confrontation which causes serious damage to all parties to the conflict without any exception.

Palestinians make substantial contributions to a just political settlement in the Middle East. Their long, courageous struggle against the Israeli occupation, the intifadah of the Palestinian population on the Western Bank of the Jordan River and in the Gaza Strip lasting for several years now, graphically demonstrate the futility of attempts by the ruling circles of Tel Aviv to impose their diktat on the Arabs to preserve the unfair status quo in the region.

Today the whole international community clearly understands that it will be possible to put an end to hostility and confrontation, to achieve democratic and lasting peace in the Middle East only on the basis of the balance of interests, recognition of the legitimate rights of all the sides involved in the conflict. This naturally implies a just solution - in conformity to the United Nations resolutions - of the Palestinian problem, which is the core of the Middle East settlement.

The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee jointly with other Soviet public organizations will continue to spare no effort in promoting peace and justice in the Middle East, ensuring successful work of the Madrid Conference which must provide guarantees of a secure independent development for all States and peoples of the region and put an end to the years-long tragedy of the Palestinian people. Once again we reaffirm our solidarity with the friendly Palestinian people which seek to restore its legitimate rights.

SOVIET PEACE NOW PUBLIC COMMITTEE

We are grateful to receive your message on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

We support the rapid and just settlement of the Palestinian problem and comprehensive realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people. We also support the political efforts by the international community in order to bring about lasting peace in the Middle East.

We are ready to contribute to the course of the Palestinian rights and peaceful development of all the peoples of the Middle East.

SOVIET WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

The Soviet Women's Committee greets the participants in the meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People dedicated to the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. We confirm our unfailing solidarity with the Palestinian people, support the heroic intifadah, and are satisfied with the process begun for peaceful settlement of the Middle East, the legal basis of which are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). We hope that the new stage of negotiations will bring us nearer to the key solution to the Middle East problems and will promote the implementation of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to self-determination and the formation of its independent State.

We wish the Committee success with its activities and express confidence that it will make a positive contribution to the course of peace on the long-suffering Palestinian land.

UNION OF PALESTINIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

The Union of Palestinian American Women (UPAW) wishes to express its solemn commitment and continued solidarity with the Palestinian people living in occupied Palestinian land for the last 24 years and throughout their diaspora.

As was duly recorded in the annals of United Nations history, the adoption of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, which provided that two independent States, a Jewish State and an Arab State, be set up in Palestine by 1 October 1948 and, in addition, resolution 181 (II) provided for the establishment of a corpus separatum for the city of Jerusalem, which is subject to a special international regime to be administered by the United Nations, still has not been fully implemented for Palestinian Arabs.

On this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, UPAW wishes to applaud the work of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and concomitantly wishes to express its urgent concerns for the safety, protection and human welfare of the total Palestinian population living under severe and blatant human rights violations.

Therefore, UPAW strongly appeals to the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, and the relevant United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations to exert their honourable efforts towards guaranteeing the implementation not only of General Assembly resolution 181 (II), but all relevant United Nations resolutions which were adopted by the United Nations bodies, yet never implemented.

While the world community has viewed the unprecedented and historical opening session of the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference with renewed hope to a solution to end the protracted Arab/Israeli conflict, UPAW encourages the relevant United Nations bodies to add to the ensured momentum of securing a just and lasting peace through the adherence of international and universal human rights laws.

World peace with justice can be achieved when honourable people in positions of influence, and with decent standards, ensure that universal laws and precious freedoms chime in throughout to safeguard all of humanity.

On this day of the 29th of November, UPAW stands with other people and nations around the world to observe, through our many planned activities, and commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, with the hope that the Palestinian people's dream of self-determination and Palestinian statehood will be forthcoming in the very near future.

UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF SWEDEN, DISTRICT OF VASTMANLAND

Although we cannot be present, we participate in your commemoration of 29 November with our warmest thoughts and intense hopes for a better future for the Palestinian people.

Now it is the time, at last, for the world to show solidarity with the United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.

The resolutions are there to be implemented, not to be negotiated about once again, with Israel as a self-appointed veto power.

If Mr. Shamir and his Government do not change their policy, we think it is time to impose sanctions on the State of Israel.

We shall do our best in the united work for justice.

Next year in Palestine!

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION

The Women's International Democratic Federation unites millions of women from 116 affiliated organizations in 150 countries of the world.

The Federation welcomes this opportunity to join the international community in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and thus reaffirming the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to a homeland. The 2.3 million living in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967 and the roughly 4 million in the diaspora, including refugee campus and neighbouring Arab States, have suffered and endured for more than 45 years.

The intifadah, which soon enters its fifth year, epitomizes the determination of the Palestinian people to struggle for its national rights and to keep the question of Palestine in the forefront of international concern. The cost of the intifadah to the women and their families in the occupied Palestinian territories has been devastating: more than 1,550 dead, about 25 per cent children, 118,000 wounded, 8,000 miscarriages as a result of tear-gas, more than 2,000 homes razed, demolished or sealed; 15,000 (among them women and children) held under administrative detention without trial or charge. The jail conditions under the Israeli military authorities are notorious violations of all standards of humane treatment of prisoners and the international community has been seized with this issue for many years.

The Women's International Democratic Federation sees the Israeli policy of continuing to build new settlements as a deliberate attempt to annex the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to expel the Palestinian population in order to absorb the massive influx of Jewish immigration. This expansionist settlement policy of the Israeli Government is a dangerous threat to any peaceful resolution of the complex problems around the question of Palestine.

However, the Federation sees the Madrid Conference as a welcome initiative with some positive developments relative to the Palestine question. However, it remains to be seen how those proposals will lead to immediate improvement of the socio-economic plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and, more importantly, to the prompt realization of all the relevant United Nations resolutions, vis-à-vis the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Arab State in Palestine.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM (PALESTINE)

On the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to be celebrated by the United Nations on 29 November 1991, I am writing to you on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and all its members in the occupied territories and Jerusalem. We wish to extend our hand of solidarity to embrace this solemn day. We also write to express our passionate concern for the continued plight of the Palestinian people.

Under Israeli occupation, we can know only policies of harsh repression and wanton brutality, a total lack of freedom, and the absence of protection from the United Nations. We, the people of the intifadah, welcome the support of the international community as we would more than welcome the implementation of General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

In expressing our support for the International Day of Solidarity and its objectives, we reassert those rights repeatedly upheld by United Nations resolutions - the right to self-determination, the right of return for Palestinians displaced and uprooted from their homes by successive waves of Israeli military aggression, the return of Palestinian land, occupied by Israel since 1967, and the right to an independent Palestinian State.

We raise our voices with yours calling for the end of Israeli occupation and for the urgent protection from the United Nations for the Palestinian people who are daily abused, humiliated and imprisoned, and whose inalienable rights are blatantly denied.

We wish to re-echo your demands and, in the spirit of peace and freedom, we would urge you to place pressure on the co-sponsors of the Middle East Peace Conference to recognize the legitimate rights and demands of the Palestinian people and further demand an immediate halt to the aggressive incursion of new Israeli settlements in the occupied territories which seek to undermine the international peace initiative. We reiterate the international message "land for peace" publicly rejected by Israel. WILPF ceaselessly strives for peace and a future that heralds an independent Palestine State, and not a State of autonomy that has neither land nor equal human rights.

Your support strengthens the resolve and determination of the Palestinian people in its efforts to secure a just and durable peace for peoples in this region. Your commitment through this special International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People brings us together, and anchors the role of the United Nations to our work as we strive towards the same objective.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM (SWITZERLAND)

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom salutes the Palestinian people on this International Day of Solidarity.

We applaud the women, men and children within occupied Palestine who, through the intifadah, struggle to throw off the oppression of the occupying forces. We wish them added courage, strength and boldness in their efforts.

We recognize, in particular, the suffering of women and children, and the devastation of families due to the occupation.

We urge the international community to educate, organize and mobilize for the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine.

WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

In its memorandum of 3 October to the President of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly, the World Federation of Trade Unions welcomed the initiative taken by the United States and the Soviet Union to convene an international conference on the Middle East. As stated in the memorandum, we saw that initiative as recognition that "policies based on double standards which have prevailed ... in relation to Middle East issues, should be abandoned".

It is in this spirit that we applaud the Madrid Conference and call upon all parties to proceed with the utmost urgency to resolve outstanding questions as rapidly as possible.

The success of the initiative will be judged to the extent that the principle of non-discrimination is respected in implementing the relevant United Nations resolutions concerning the rights of the Palestinian people, the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories and full respect for the security and sovereignty of all States in the region.

Our call for urgency is underscored by the fact that more than 1,500 Palestinians were killed in the period from the beginning of the intifadah through September of this year--and that a quarter of those were children. Our call for urgency is underscored by the fact that nearly 120,000 Palestinians have been wounded; that the entire Palestinian population in the occupied territories have been subjected to curfew that, in sum, add up to nearly three years; that more than 2,000 Palestinian houses have been demolished; that 8,000 women have had miscarriages due to tear-gas used by the Israeli occupation forces.

The continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory must be ended if peace is to be restored to the region. The international community cannot sit by and allow this violation of the spirit of the United Nations Charter, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the violation of approximately 300 other United Nations resolutions adopted since 1983 with the support of the vast majority of States Members of the United Nations.

As we join with others in commemorating the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, the World Federation of Trade Unions reiterates its joint declaration with the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and pledges its continued solidarity with the workers and people of Palestine. We salute their courageous intifadah and fallen martyrs.

We support the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and join with those who call for the establishment of an independent Arab State in Palestine.

IV. CLOSING STATEMENTS

H.E. Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo, Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

[Original: French]

On behalf of the entire Committee, I should like to express our sincere appreciation to the heads of State, heads of Government, Ministers for Foreign Affairs, Governments and to the organizations I have just listed, and to all participants for their constant efforts towards a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, and for the support they have always given to the objectives and activities of our Committee.

The statements which we have heard and the messages of solidarity which we have received today demonstrate once again the determination of the international community to progress towards the establishment of peace in the Middle East through the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, and above all its right to self-determination and to the establishment of an independent Arab State of Palestine in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations, and in particular General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 1947, whose forty-fourth anniversary we are observing today.

I can assure you that we, members of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, will spare no effort for the attainment of these objectives which are of vital importance not only to the Palestinian people but also for the triumph of peace and security in the region as a whole.

Mr. Farouk Kaddoumi, Head of the Political Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization

[Original: Arabic]

I am pleased, at the conclusion of this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, to extend greetings to all of you, and thank you on behalf of the Palestine Liberation Organization for your brotherly participation in commemorating this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in its just struggle to achieve its inalienable national rights on its own soil, Palestine, and to liberate this land from Israeli occupation, and to establish its own independent State.

I am also delighted to thank the Presidents and Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and all the Governments and all the friendly organizations which have declared their solidarity by messages or by celebrations of this International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

This international solidarity with oppressed peoples such as ours which are chafing under the yoke of occupation gives these peoples support and enhances their determination to achieve their objectives of freedom and independence.

Our gathering here today, in the United Nations, is but an expression of the importance of this forum and its effectiveness in the service of our causes. It is also an effective means for building a new international community that would be free of oppression, occupation and racial discrimination - a world of free independent peoples, a world of justice and peace.

The hope that we all look forward to in the wake of the Madrid peace conference needs to be nurtured by faithful efforts and good faith on the part of all the parties concerned. It also needs cooperation and continued international support. Our Palestinian people, which has been struggling for very many years now to achieve its national objectives, yearns for liberty and is working faithfully to achieve a just peace. Its democratic struggle, which started four years ago, through its intifadah inside our occupied Palestinian territories, is evidence of one people's intention to achieve peace.

In conclusion, I reiterate our thanks to all of you on this day. We deeply appreciate your faithful contribution. I should like also to extend appreciation to the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for its sincere efforts under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Absa Claude Diallo. I should also like to express appreciation for the prominent role played by the non-governmental organizations, as well as the International Coordinating Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations on the Question of Palestine. I should also like to thank the United Nations Department of Public Information for their continued efforts to promote mass media awareness of the question of Palestine. I reiterate our thanks, our appreciation and our most sincere wishes to all your friendly peoples, hoping that we shall achieve our noble national objectives.

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